DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 474 945 JC 030 216

AUTHOR	Brewer, Beverly Ann
TITLE	Navigating the Community College Landscape: Toward Relationship and Community.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	383p.; Doctoral dissertation presented to the University of Toronto for Ph.D. in Education.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses - Doctoral Dissertations (041) -- Opinion Papers (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC16 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	College Faculty; College Students; *Community Colleges; *Curriculum; Educational Policy; *Experiential Learning; Females; Life Events; *Nontraditional Students; Student Attitudes; Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Student Relationship; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Canada

ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative community college landscape study using historical details and temporal qualities to point out the challenges and dilemmas of applying curriculum to real-world experience. The author uses the concreteness of the Canadian community college context and her own experience there to talk about student/teacher relationships, teacher identity and community, curriculum, and adult education. This study is based on the author's teaching experience in the community college system. It draws on curricular issues and the narratives of three female community college students who were participants in the study. Chapter 1, "Teaching Touchstones: Community, Conversation, and Curriculum," introduces the author's early teaching experiences. Chapter 2, "Crossing the Border into Post-Secondary Education," analyzes curriculum planning and raises questions about the intersection between theory and practice in the classroom. Chapter 3, "In the Literature: Looking for Terra Firma," is a review of the literature on adult education. Chapter 4, "In the Literature and Out of Bounds," continues to contextualize this examination. Chapter 5, "Using Narrative Inquiry to Find Open Ground," describes the tensions lived out in the researcher/teacher inquiry. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 tell classroom stories and offer narrative reflections. Includes three appendices and 151 references. (NB)

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by

Beverley Ann Brewer

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
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Abstract

This thesis is a community college landscape study. Historical details and temporal qualities unfold through the story of a teaching lifetime. The stories in my thesis point to challenges and dilemmas of applying *curriculum as lived experience*. I have spoken about curriculum that is broken and a teacher identity that is unravelling among fragments of change on the college landscape. I use the concreteness of the community college context and my own experience on that landscape to talk about teacher/student relationships, teacher identity and community, and, curriculum and adult education. Conceiving the community college in terms of a professional knowledge landscape, I have disclosed responses to what goes on inside and outside the classroom and feelings of discomfiture. I have shown the relationship and interaction among the people who, over time, live and work through events and transitions on the terrain of the community college. This study advances the understanding of the community college as a place where complex relationships intersect and shape teaching experience and teacher identity.

Community based teaching and an Innu women's classroom visit, show patterns among formal, informal and non-formal theoretical distinctions in the literature. A review of the adult education literature is pivotal to this study. Through a pragmatic account of an early adoption of grand theoretical narratives and principles of adult education, this study identifies the need for research that more appropriately reflects the teaching and learning environment and opens possibilities to make theoretical contributions to teacher development.

The influencing presence of teacher knowledge and experience, from an earlier time, to a teacher's evolving professional identity unfolds through this thesis. This study shows shaping relationships between changing community college histories and shifts in teachers' lives. My study identifies teachers as living on shifting ground and among institutional fragments where their professional identities are no longer supported by the landscape's conditions.

Pointing to the need for policy decisions to be grounded in actual life experience, this study provides a pathway for understanding contemporary community college classrooms and the impact of landscape changes on the fluidity of relationships among students, teachers and the subject matter.

Acknowledgements

The narrative intersections among people, places and events in the duration of my personal/professional life are paramount to my study. Listed are some of the people who live at the cornerstones of my life experience. Thank you to my lifelong friends – Susan Blue for reflective listening and Joyce Duncan for pragmatic support. Thank you to dear friend and colleague Norine Cooper, for conversation and clarity. Dr. D. Clements, thank you for your wisdom. To my friends in teaching – Penny, Roz, Ann, Jan, Lyn and Chris, Barb and Cindy – thank you. Appreciation to Joan Williams – for careful attention to formating. To my friend and very first writing partner Gail Lindsay, thank you for your dear qualities shared so generously. From among the WIP and TIP seminar groups, Vicki Fenton/Ross, Elain Chan, Rosalie Young and Veronical Ellis are especially valued for their distinct gifts to community. A very special thank you to Vicki Fenton/Ross for shared travels, scholarship and friendship. For Gail Matthews's curiosity and enthusiasm, I am most appreciative. For these women – friends and colleagues – I am thankful for genuine conversation and budding scholarship. Thank you to the women who graduated before – Marilyn Dickson, Maureen Dunn, Florence Sampson and Deidre DeCarion – and who amply shared their stories of writing. To Sandy Semeniuk, who gave so much, thank you. For their presence in scholarship, I am grateful to Ming Fang He and JoAnne Phillion. For the professors who pushed me to think and move beyond boundaries of my experience, I am thankful. To Dr. Brent Kilbourne, I say thank you for listening. For guidance and exchange of dialogue, I appreciate Dr. Howard Russell. For provocative questions early in my journey, I thank Dr. Merle Wahlstrom. Steadfast, Dr. JoHan Aitken nurtured my growth and also roused literature to re-enter my life. I am grateful to Dr. Michael Kompf, my external examiner. For my teacher and supervisor, Dr. Michael Connelly, I am so very thankful. From my supervisor, I experience many lessons of scholarship. For my hustand, partner-in-life and best friend Jack Walters, I am forever grateful.

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Prologue: Seeking True North: Charting a Course of Inquiry

I returned to school, in 1993, seeking *community* – something I felt that I had lost somewhere over the duration of my teaching journey. I pursued my personal quest for teacher conversation and entered into a *Bachelor of Education in Adult Education* degree program at a satellite university campus. During the program, which I enjoyed very much, I revisited some of the adult education literature that I had come to endorse whole-heartedly in my teacher thinking. It was during this time, year fourteen in my teaching journey, when I began to realize that the adult education literature was *outside* my experience of the classroom and *outside* the experience of my life.

Following my completion of the *Bachelor of Education in Adult Education* program in 1995, I entered *The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*, where I completed my masters program. In 1996, I continued a doctoral program to find a place where I could feel more at home with who I was, and who I was continuing to become as a teacher. During the course in the *Foundations in Curriculum*, 1300 class, one of the first courses in my master's program, I felt quite comfortable, saying and writing, that I experienced my life in the same way I experienced my classroom. Through reflecting on my teacher stories, and reconstructing these stories of experience, I realized that in certain places on the landscape, I had become both self-conscious and secretive about my belief that the classroom is actual life experience. My identity as a teacher was problematic and unsettled, and this lead to my ongoing research.

Unravelling (of Identity) in Narrative Inquiry

My work in narrative began in the summer of 1995 when I entered my master's program. Through my courses in narrative, taught by Professor Michael Connelly, I was introduced to the theoretical underpinnings and methodological perspectives that have come to shape my thinking, my research and my teaching practice. It was during these courses that I was introduced to narrative both as a phenomenon and as a research methodology. When I reflect back (though I did not realize it until after working in a women's thesis writing group, followed by an intense writing partnership with my friend and writing partner Gail Lindsay), I can see that my work in narrative allowed me to question my teacher identity. What I thought I knew about teaching in the community college system began to unravel. I began to discover, in a painful sort of way, that, what once succeeded in the classroom no longer worked. The more unsettled I felt, the more I realized that I had become a teacher who was entrenched in the certainty of knowing herself, her students and her practice, despite daily evidence to the contrary.

A Community College Teacher Seeks Community and Conversation in Higher Education

In June of the year 2000 I was scheduled to attend an adult education research conference in Vancouver, British Columbia. I had mixed feelings about attending for a number of reasons. For one, none of my graduate school colleagues planned to attend, but this was not too surprising since I was not a student in the adult education department. Though my research focus was adult education, I was enrolled in the department of curriculum and teacher development. As a result of my growing up as a teacher in the community college system, a field that I take to be adult education, I attended the conference hoping to meet others who were studying, working, and researching in the field.

The June 2000 conference fell on the tail of my exhaustive search into the adult education literature, a task that was fraught with visceral responses, and one that tugged at my professional identity. On reflection I now understand that the conference presented further challenges to, rather than affirmation of, my professional identity. For someone who thinks herself an adult educator and who uses the terms *educator* and *teacher* interchangeably, my feelings of discomfort were further intensified by the experience.

Some of my turmoil about attending this conference subsided when I recognized some of the presenters, people whose work I had at one time embraced, and whose thinking was dispersed throughout my reading logs and the drafts of my literature chapter.

Conference: Day One

During a session entitled "Problems with Mapping the Field of Education for Adults" the presenters amplified some of the intricacies of their research journey into a field whose nature is "contestable," and where "it is almost impossible to connect where the literature should be." Reinforcing my own sense of the field's fragmentation and using the adjective "hodgepodge," conference presenters, Jarvis and Griffins, suggested that the field's development is like that of a branch of a tree with many twigs and that constructing a history of a discipline leads to the problem of creating artificial categories, which are essentially meaningless.

The parameters of adult education discourse are seemingly boundless. I thought of my own uncertainty about where to begin, and how I moved among the literature in Higher Education, Continuing Education, Vocational Education, Community Development and Andragogy. It was during this particular session that I felt affirmed – I was not alone in feeling the struggle within the literature. Perhaps, some of the other people, who attended this round table and the subsequent discussion, also sought affirmation.

In my journal I wrote,

> *The session 'Problems with Mapping the Field of Education for Adults' was scheduled alongside three other roundtable presentations in the same room. I couldn't help but notice that one of the presenters appeared surprised by the number of people in attendance, and perhaps a little embarrassed that the other three roundtable groups abandoned the room to make further space for the people who kept coming. Extra chairs were retrieved from all corners of the room to accommodate the interest.* (Journal Entry, June 3, 2000).

Conference: Day Two

Except for an abbreviated, yet meaningful conversation with a woman from the United Kingdom who also approaches her research in a way that resembles narrative inquiry, I felt disconnected. The familiar sense of distance and exclusion from the general discourse of adult education set in and evolved throughout the rest of my time at the conference.

The panel discussion, held in the university auditorium, promised to outline future research paths and priorities in adult education. I sat in anticipation of hearing about new ways to think about the field. I expected to hear about research puzzles and inquiries for the future. When the second speaker addressed the audience, it was by far one of the most eloquent assemblages of words I had heard. The beautifully crafted words were evidence of many hours of exhaustive searching for empirical detail. Terms such as oppression, coercion, liberal conservatism, capitalism, individualism, globalism, and existentialism were threaded throughout the presentation.

As I sat listening for connections to my experience and the research questions that I bring to adult education, the speaker's eloquent words continued to tumble forward into the audience. Seconds after the speaker's closing remarks, and within a sliver of silence, a strong male voice came bounding from the seats before me. "Bravo. Bravo." He had jumped to his feet and clapped his hands forcibly together. "Bravo!"

I sat stunned. My first inclination was to check that I wasn't at the theatre. I sat in amazement and I wondered what would happen next. Person after person stood, and the applause continued. As I stayed seated, the shadows cast all around me from the people standing and applauding tugged at my familiar questions of identity. My questions of professional identity were amplified within those lingering moments. Bubbled up were familiar questions about who I am as a teacher, and my relationships with students inside and outside the classroom. The fact that my thesis is about understanding teacher identity on a shifting professional knowledge community college landscape added to my sense of disconnectedness.

As the applause subsided, an older man sitting in my peripheral vision leaned to the women on his right, and whispered in what I interpreted as exasperation, "*This* is nothing new. They were *talking* about this twenty years ago." Relieved to have overheard this comment, it suggested that I was not entirely alone in my thinking and my sense of disconnection. I would have liked to have been a part of this conversation, but unfortunately it moved to words on the page as the older man and younger woman continued to communicate by writing on a pad of yellow lined paper.

To try and find additional ways to enter into the adult education field of research, I attended a Newcomers, bring-your-own-lunch session. At the end of the day I wrote in my journal that,

> *... Eventually the room filled with people carrying trays of food. Two women placed their food trays at my table and left to find chairs, while I tried not to appear too thankful for their company. We introduced ourselves, and discovered I knew the work of one of the women quite well. She asked me about my work, and then we talked briefly in about the differences and similarities of using learning contracts with students in university and community college settings. These few moments of dialogue felt like important corner stones of the meaningfulness that I hoped this conference would provide.*

Later the same day I attended a graduate students' meeting where ten students, all at the masters and doctoral level, were in attendance. After the meeting I wrote in my journal:

> *I use language that no one else here uses. I think in terms of curriculum. I talk about students, teachers and their lives. When I use and explain the term landscape, I feel even more alone.*

I felt pretty certain about my intense feelings around this conference experience and where these feelings were coming from. With this intensity came a feeling of voicelessness and the notion of being on the outside of a community of adult education scholars I had hoped to join. I had no sense of belonging or being at home in a research community. I felt both disillusioned and disappointed. Clarity about these responses to the conference became more apparent after writing in my journal:

> *The session topics this afternoon did not pull at me so I chose instead to walk around the university campus. I felt as*

though I were on my own personal adventure. It was a hot Saturday and I passed very few people as I wandered. I found a beautiful corner garden of rhododendrons in full colour at the end of their season, pathways, and a beach. In a sense the physical landscape allowed me to reflect on why I continue to maintain the focus my work on the physical knowledge landscape of the community college. As I walked through the campus, I remembered the range of visceral responses I had to the literature, and to the conference.

On the dark, yet inviting pathway I saw trees that I had only read about, larger and greener than I had ever seen before. White beads of light, seemingly dancing their way through the dense foliage, still held the moisture from the morning rain and gave me cause to feel brighter and more hopeful.

The people on the beach, some naked some not, and the imprint of my Birkenstocks in the soft sand of low tide, resonated and somehow emphasized the meaning of my struggle into teacher and student identities on the landscape of a community college system that continually shifts in a changing world.

As I walked, taking in the corners of the campus landscape, I thought of the past and the future. I was also very much in the present, careful with my footing on the steep hill, aware of the strength in my back and marveling that only a few months ago I had had a piece of bone surgically removed from *my spine. I thought of my not knowing if I would ever walk rough terrain again. I thought of my writing partner who had attended this university in the late 1970's as an undergraduate. I wondered if she understood how the landscape shaped, and was shaped by her experience.*

I thought of this landscape, framed by the mountains that were tipped in snow, and I wondered if I lived, taught, researched, and did my thinking here, how the dailiness of my life might be different. I wondered if the people who live here understand the mountains, ocean, gardens, and the strong trees as shaping their lives. (Journal entry, June 4, 2000).

Throughout my thesis I navigate the complex *professional knowledge landscape* of the community college system. Using Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) conceptual framework and special language, I hope to use the concreteness of the community college context, and my experience of twenty years teaching on that landscape to talk about community life in the classroom, teacher/student relationships, teacher identity, curriculum, and adult education. Minding Brookfield's (1994) suggestion for a shift to a more "socially embedded and socially constructed phenomenon" and away from the almost exclusive dependence on psychological resources in adult education literature, I use narrative inquiry (Connelly and Clandinin, 1989) and autobiographical research methods (Smith, 1994; Bateson, 1990; Heilbrun, 1988).

This thesis is a landscape study. I am writing out of my experience of teaching in the community college system and what I know about adult education. I draw on curriculum issues experienced throughout my own teaching history and the life narratives of three women community college students who are participants in my study. My literature search in adult education, a field that appears not to pay much attention to landscape, is pivotal to my study.

For this landscape study I borrow the landscape metaphor from Clandinin and Connelly (1995) because it allows me to talk about *space, place* and *time* and the community college as a *moral* and *intellectual* place. The *professional knowledge landscape* metaphor allows me to capture the intense relationships and tensions that teachers experience on the community college landscape with colleagues, students, places and events. Through my narrative research into my participants' experience I am learning about classroom relationships with students.

In order to understand what disturbed me about my professional knowledge landscape life, and question how community college teachers live inside the classroom with their students, I also pursue how teachers live *outside* the community college classroom and *in* other professional places on the landscape. These feelings of disturbance both include and go beyond the walls of the classroom. I have many memories of conversations with colleagues about the conflicting nature of our jobs. Many educators agree that perhaps the easiest tension on the landscape that they have to deal with, are students.

While the adult education literature attends to classroom practice (For example, Davis, 1993; Cranton, 1992; Brookfield, 1990; Brundage and Mackeracher, 1980), though, for the most part, the attention of theorists in adult education is devoid of *actual life experience* in the classroom. What isn't accounted for in the literature or at the professional conferences I have attended so far, is that teachers spend time inside *and* outside the classroom; teachers make important decisions, and live part of their professional lives in *both* places. Adult education discourse does not embrace the notion that teachers working on the community college landscape also live their professional lives outside the classroom and in communal places.

My inquiry recognizes the contradiction implicit in the widely accepted notion that adult education is synonymous with life-long learning. I argue that life-long learning, as Dewey (1938) meant it in terms of *continuity* and how it is embraced in the adult education literature and in much of adult education practice is actually *discontinuity.* Throughout the literature there is the debate between the meaning of schooling and adult education. For the most part, except for data collection purposes, narratives of experience and community college discourse are not embraced in the adult education movement or in the literature. There is much criticism about any notion of seamlessness between traditional schooling and education for adults in adult learning situations. Essentially, the adult education movement does not embrace schooling; even though, almost everyone involved in learning in the adult education context has been a participant in the school system in one form or another. Most students in adult education contexts have been a part of curriculum, yet the term curriculum is used minimally in adult education literature. There is little to no attention paid to continuity of the teaching and learning experiences for community college educators, or to the life narratives of students who attend the community college in the adult education literature. Stories of experience throughout my thesis capture the intense relationships and the tensions in the practical world of the community college educator.

Concerns about curriculum – a term not embraced by many adult education theorists – created turmoil in my community college teaching life. When I went to the literature with these concerns I did not recognize any evidence of my experience. A desire to feel theoretically grounded and to have a sense of social justification for my work in the college system with students has been an overwhelming thread in my personal narrative.

With these tensions I returned to school, enrolling first in a Bachelor of Education program in Adult Education at Brock University. Following this experience was a Masters in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning and my entry into doctoral study in the Centre for Teacher Development, in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Since being at graduate school as a masters and doctoral student, I had become accustomed to thinking in terms of research puzzles and delving into experience and the meaning behind the accepted and unexamined rhetoric of the grand social and theoretical narratives.

How My Thesis Unfolds

In chapter one, entitled *Teaching Touchstones: Community, Conversation and Curriculum*, I introduce the reader to my beginning teaching experiences in a community based educational context. The story of my beginning teaching journey in 1980 embraces teacher, student, and community college classroom experiences. As the story of my teaching journey unfolds, stories about crossing borders and boundaries into post-secondary education are also told. The chapter points to the challenges and dilemmas community college teachers and students live inside and outside the classroom. Questions are asked about a teacher's evolving identity. I write about teacher identity and the unfolding tensions on the professional knowledge landscape continuum during the temporal periods of 1984 and a 1999 classroom situation. This thesis tells a story about a teacher, who without formal teacher training grounded her identity in unquestioned acceptance of the adult education literature. I ponder issues of teacher identity and the teacher's relationship to theoretical research.

In chapter two, *Crossing the Border into Post-Secondary Education*, I continue with teaching stories of experience and narrativize the community college landscape. Chapter two captures the teacher's intentions, planning and thinking for the curriculum. As a car ride is storied and a conversation unfolds, there is the sense of an impending collision. Curriculum tensions evolve throughout the chapter. There is doubt about the value of a teacher's knowledge that was grounded in the experience that the teacher grew up in. Questions about the theoretical world of adult education, and its relation to classroom reality are raised. In the context of a changing social landscape, questions are asked about adult education and the theoretical literature. As my curriculum story unfolds, I pose the question *who does the curriculum belong to?* Chapter two moves temporally back and forth through stories on the continuum of my own experience, pointing to puzzles and questions about teacher identity, curriculum as experience, students as learners, and the adult education literature.

In chapter three, *In the Literature: Looking for Terra Firma*, I review the adult education literature. I provide an overview of the challenges and difficulties that I encountered in coming to terms with being in the adult education theoretical literature. Chapter four, *In the Literature and Out of Bounds*, is written in three parts. Part One tells my story about being in the literature. I write about aspects of the adult education literature that I embraced into my community college teaching practice. In Part Two, I present a phantom argument with an adult education theorist, as a way to think about self-directed learning and the learning contract, two aspects of the adult education literature that I readily adopted into my practice in the community college classroom. I tell and reconstruct my experience with one particular aspect of a curriculum policy and its relationship with the students and their program of study.

In chapter five, *Using Narrative Inquiry to Find Open Ground*, I describe how I use narrative inquiry methods for my study. I introduce the 1998 classroom that I studied narratively. I discuss my considerations about choosing my participants among the students in my classroom, where I was the teacher and the researcher. Tensions lived out in the researcher/teacher dialectic begin to reveal themselves in this chapter.

Chapter six, *A Post Secondary Classroom: Collision, Chaos and Transformation in Three Acts*. Chapter six is written in three sections: A, B and C. A 1998 classroom story, told in the form of a play, unfolds through Chapter Six A, Chapter Six B and Chapter Six C. Beginning with a prelude, my participants and the classroom setting are introduced. Through the voices and narrative writing of my participants', the day-to-day classroom events of a 1998 classroom experience unfold. Chapter seven, *Temporal Shifts and Interactions on the Community College Landscape: Shaping Experience and Identity*, is a narrative reflection of the 1998 classroom experience written about in the previous chapter parts. In chapter eight, *Navigating the Classroom and Student Relationships with Lucielle: Co-travellers*, my participant's story is told. Summarizing my thesis, in chapter nine, *Terra Incognita*, I discuss connections among the community college as an educational institution and other professional education landscapes. Chapter nine looks to the future.

There are three appendices in my thesis. In Appendix I, entitled *Post-Secondary Education: Community Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology*, I story the history of the Ontario community college and the shaping influences of people and places in the larger social world. I attempt to orient my reader to the grand social narrative of the Ontario College system. The subject outline for the 1998-group work class, written about in chapters six and seven, is included for reference in Appendix II. A student code of conduct is included in Appendix III.

For my thesis, I use narrative inquiry and personal experience methods (Connelly and Clandinin, 1994) to explore experience as lived at a community college. Following Connelly and Clandinin (1996) I use the term *landscape* metaphorically to talk about the college environment and the structure. My own perplexities about *who I am* and *who I have become* as an adult educator draw me to this inquiry. The heart of this inquiry is how a teacher identity, grounded in the certainty of adult learning and social work principles has sometimes unraveled into self-doubt and uncertainty.

Throughout this thesis I share the connections I make between my past life experiences and how their reconstruction brings meaning making and knowledge to teaching and learning on the community college landscape. I write both narratively and autobiographically. I share personal life transformations in terms of personal awakenings and how these experiences interact with the dialectic role of an educator and a researcher. It is important for the reader to understand that in the course of my research inquiry I was both a researcher and a teacher in the community college classroom.

I have embraced the notion that *stories to live by* compose teacher identity (Clandinin and Connelly, 1999). Building on Connelly and Clandinin's notion that teachers' working lives are shaped by stories, I use stories about teachers, students, and community life to explore teacher professional identity on the personal knowledge landscape of the community college. I am drawn to Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) work on landscape (1995) and identity (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999) because of my own intense responses and feelings of disturbance to curriculum experiences in the college system. Embedded in the stories I tell, are intentional and unintentional learning experiences from the dialectic of the teacher and the researcher. Threaded throughout my thesis are stories of identity, and how I believe I have grown as an educator, a researcher and as a person learning from her participants and her students.

Chapter One

Teaching Touchstones: Community, Conversation and Curriculum

How My Journey Began (and Why its Worth Studying)

My thesis begins with an inquiry into the value of my teacher knowledge – knowledge grounded in a past experience that is dramatically different from the current community college environment. This study is motivated by the question, how do community college stories of experience shape a post-secondary teacher's professional identity? Narrative questions are asked about the construction of a professional identity for a community college teacher whose experience embraces the crossing of physical borders and philosophical boundaries between educational contexts that are informal and non-post-secondary, to the more formalized post-secondary community college education situation. My thesis is about a community college teacher's early adoption of adult education theoretical perspectives into her practice on a shifting community college landscape. Through this thesis, I delve into my own story of experience about a teacher identity that feels interrupted, unsettled and problematic.

I introduce the reader to language and terms not generally used in the adult education or higher education theoretical literature. These terms include *curriculum*, and the interchangeable use of *teacher* and *educator* and *student* and *learner.* I also use the terms *situation* and *experience* and Dewey's (1938) notion that school is a form of life, and life experience is part of the classroom. I draw on Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) broad sense that "Curriculum can become one's life course of action. It can mean the paths we have followed and paths we intend to follow" (p. 1). I show the reader how, in my beginning years teaching adult students, I grounded my teacher identity in my acceptance of Newstart Life Skills (1980) and the theoretical notions of adult education principles and practice outlined by Brundage and Mackeracher (1980) and championed by Knowles (1980).

Using Narrative Terms to Understand Experience

In this thesis, I use narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) and personal experience methods (Connelly and Clandinin, 1994) to explore experiences in adult learning at a community college. I build on Connelly and Clandinin's research programs into schools and apply some of their thinking about teacher identity to my inquiry into post-secondary teacher identity construction on the community college landscape. I expect to learn about the impact of crossing borders and boundaries between categorical distinctions used both on the community college landscape and in adult education and higher education theoretical literature. To think about the meaning of experience through the narrative of a community college teaching journey, to a teacher's professional identity, I adopt the metaphorical notion, borrowing from Anzaldùa (1987), and use the terms *border* and *boundary*. In my thesis inquiry I cross theoretical-borders and boundaries and I seek a different way to think about teaching and learning in post-secondary community college education.

Following Connelly and Clandinin (1996), I am also using the term *landscape* metaphorically to talk about the college environment and its structure. My own perplexities about *who I am*, and *who I have become* as an adult educator draw me to this inquiry. The heart of this inquiry is about a teacher identity grounded in the certainty of adult learning, feminist and group work principles that have sometimes unraveled into self-doubt and uncertainty. Capturing the spirit of the puzzle in my inquiry, is Shulz's (1997) statement that

> Teaching is a complex activity, and although abundant research has been done to examine the nature of teaching, it is still far from being fully understood. The mystery of what really happens in a classroom, why and how it happens continues to challenge us. Teaching is a uniquely personal and intuitive activity that requires us to focus on its qualitative nature if we are to increase our understanding of it (p.1).

Through this thesis, I share the connections I make between my past life experiences and how their reconstruction brings meaning making and knowledge to my teaching and learning on the community college landscape. I write both narratively and autobiographically. I share personal life transformations in terms of personal awakenings and show how these experiences interact with the dialectic role of an educator and a researcher. It is important for the reader to understand that in the course of my research inquiry I was both a researcher and a teacher in the community college classroom. Intentional and unintentional learning experiences from the dialectic of the teacher and the researcher are described in the stories I tell. Stories of identity, and how I believe I have grown as an educator, researcher and as a person learning from my participants and my students, are told throughout my thesis.

Embarking on My Journey

I felt challenged when I started to think about my thesis and to draw on twenty years of my teaching history. In the context of all my teaching and learning memories and virtually hundreds of stories about teaching, I felt overwhelmed about where on my teaching continuum to begin. I revisited the exercise of writing a life chronicle. I began to think about my twenty-year teaching career as exemplified by stories of my first year, middle, and a more recent year. As my life chronicle unfolded on the paper, two stories stood out: an encounter with a former student that inspired memories of my earlier teaching practice, and a more recent story of teaching a group work course to college students preparing for employment in a helping profession. Both stories are on a continuum of my teaching lifetime in adult education teaching practice in the context of the community college system. The stories raise questions about a teacher's identity and her adoption of adult education and group work theoretical literature that alleges to inform classroom practice and curriculum development. The stories of experience that I include are embedded in a shifting community college landscape that embraces the unities, rhythm and temporal qualities that have shaped an evolving teacher identity.

The telling of this educational journey begins with my graduating from university with a four-year degree in sociology and declining acceptance into Teacher's College in spite of my dream of always wanting to be a teacher. My decision not to accept was largely grounded in my compliance with my then husband's belief that there would be no teaching jobs. The media forecasted too many teachers for the future because of the vast number of university graduate baby boomers flocking to Teacher's College. While I was disappointed not to follow my dream of being a schoolteacher, I found solace in my new status and role of wife at age twenty-one. I sought employment in the social services field and encountered the *Ontario Career Action program*. OCAP afforded me a full-time opportunity to work alongside my supervisors, Brenda and Catharine, two women who were to become my mentors in community college teaching.

Beginning in Community Based Education

When someone asks, *how did you get into teaching at community college?* I respond that I *fell* into community college teaching and recaptured a dream that I had let go of earlier in my life. I didn't anticipate becoming a teacher in the community college system teaching and learning with students who were adults. My dreams about teaching included images of me working with people who were smaller and younger. In my dreams I saw myself as a kindergarten teacher, though unlike my own, and as close to my memories of my own favoured teachers in grades one, two, five, six and twelve. Each of these individuals shaped my notion of what it means to be a teacher. Including my kindergarten teacher from who I experienced exclusion when she frequently instructed me to be 'head down' on my desk for my having returned too slowly from recess and chatting in the school lineup.

My beginning teaching situation in 1979 was the initial and pivotal step in what was later to become the touchstone for my journey in education. My teaching journey began with my experience as an OCAP trainee, which was a four-month contract in a community based vocational and life skills program for adult students. The purpose of the OCAP program was to provide new graduates like me, who were twenty-one years of age and younger, with training and supervision in a vocational area of their choice. The students, also considered trainees, were funded by what is now known as *Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)*. The community based program was administered by the community college, and situated in a church basement in a large urban center serving a relatively high-risk referral group. The referral base demanded a strong emphasis on *life skills*, focusing mostly on issues related to low self-esteem and problematic relationships within the workplace, leisure and home environments. I have since come to embrace this experience as my apprenticeship to teaching and learning with students who are adults.

The Students and Their Teachers

In reflecting on this initial group of students, I recognize the challenge of working within a group socioeconomically different from my middle-class experience. The students were working-class and a culturally diverse group. Most of the students in this particular intake were, or had been, in trouble with the law, drugs and/or alcohol. Drawing on my experience with the first group I worked with as an OCAP trainee, I call attention to the dilemmas, challenges and issues the students carried with them into the program.

> *I vividly recall one student who I'll call Jim. He carried the medicinal odour of antabuse. I recall Jim's protests and resistance to a hepatitis injection from the visiting school nurse. Jim claimed he trusted only himself to administer an injection with a needle. I felt hurt when Larry, a student I was particularly fond of, defiantly blew cigarette smoke directly into my face. (I later learned that he was stoned on percodan.) I felt abandoned by the students who left me to fend for myself the day John, an angry student who had gone off his medication, put his hands around my neck and tried to choke me when I confronted him about his behaviour on the volleyball court. (My Teacher Training Journal, February 1979).*

From Jim I began to learn about the strength and the power of the addiction to drugs and alcohol. Jim's life had been fully impacted by drug and alcohol abuse. While in the program Jim's partner, who also abused drugs, gave birth to a child who had to be treated for cocaine addiction. I felt challenged, and still do, in the way I perceived Jim falling through the cracks of our social system. I felt frustrated by his personal choice to seek and abuse antabuse as a resolution to his problems.

Another student named Alex introduced me to a value base and culture that was unfamiliar (and from my perspective consisted of coarse and senseless violence.) His world lacked the sense of safety and/or security that I felt within my own community and support network. Alex's narrative brought to light how people vary in the degree (and type) of safety and security they need. As Alex grieved a personal loss in his life due to violence, he did not seek the services of the police as a source of resolution to the incident. His choices evolved from a culture and value base that was certainly foreign to me, and one that did not have the same notion of resolution that I might have sought. In his own way Alex sought support from the Life Skills Group that, up until this recent loss, he had seemed to resist. Some of the group members were familiar with his lifestyle, and many of the students grieved with him. Alex's personal life event shaped the relationships among the students and deepened the nature of the life skills group's dialogue.

The experience of John putting his hands around my neck provided me the opportunity to gain insight into the value of a teacher's support system and the application of teamwork. I remembered how supported I felt by my supervisor, Catharine, when she listened to my description of the incident. Catharine's immediate response to this incident and her direct support and follow through felt like a full acknowledgment about my place on the team, in spite of my position as trainee. She immediately called the student's psychiatrist and learned that John had gone off his medication. John was withdrawn from the program and returned to the hospital for treatment.

From Larry I learned about boundaries and the perception of potential. I recognize that my perception of Larry was different from how he saw himself. Larry always seemed to know what to say and he appeared confident and sure of himself, especially in contrast to some of the other students in the class, who on some days appeared lost and unsure. I recall one of my supervisors, who was also touched by Larry's charm, trying to fix him and make things better for him. As I understand this situation now, I accept the smoke he blew into my face as a signal cautioning me not to overstep the boundary in the student-teacher relationship. I speculate that my supervisor, Brenda, was experiencing difficulty in accepting Larry's choices. She seemed to be working harder to change Larry, than Larry was working to change himself. Perhaps Brenda was unknowingly working through a personal or unresolved issue of her own. I suspect that I came to know this because I recognized myself in Brenda. I also wanted the students to like and accept me. While it may seem contradictory, this woman, who was also a significant mentor to me, taught me about teacher self-care and personal balance. To this day I use my memories of her as a beacon, and as a warning for professional burnout.

The stories of each one of these students taught me something about human beings, behaviours in groups and cultural and lifestyle differences. Each one of them touched my life. They taught me about acceptance, empathy and nonjudgment. From them I also moved beyond my sociology textbook understanding of the socio-economic challenges in our world, to the real problems and issues some of our learners carry with them into their classroom and work environments. I can only imagine myself as wide-eyed and naïve' about my students in this early teaching situation. I had not given any consideration to the impact of the complexity of students' life to their learning. Perhaps this stems from my youth and my early adult years, where I had become accustomed to clearly keeping life experience outside the learning situation separate from inside the classroom.

Curriculum as Life Experience in a Community Based Program

When I think about Brenda, I picture a tall slender woman entering a classroom space that is set up in a circle of lounge and sofa chairs. As Brenda walks across the room to take the seat that has been left empty for her beside the flip chart, she gregariously engages the students into the lesson plan. There is an energy and air of assurance about her. The rapport between Brenda and her students intrigued me. I recall how she shared anecdotes from her own life and the happenings of her morning. In the context of the life skills and job readiness program's curriculum, Brenda invited *life experience*, in Dewey's (1938) sense into the classroom situation.

Brenda's *curriculum,* a term not generally used in the adult education literature or by my colleagues working with adults in the informal sense, embraced the students' past, present and future life experiences (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988). Her classroom session unfolded as class time began resembling Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) explanation, "Dewey's (1938) notion of *situation* and *experience* makes it possible to imagine the teacher not so much as a maker of curriculum but as *part of it* and to imagine a place for context, culture … and temporality..." [Italics added] (p.28).

For many years after, still following Brenda's example, I thought of curriculum as something I built, worked and moved with as I came to know my students. I moved through most of my teaching career with the notion that the curriculum was tied closely to my teacher identity. However, as discussed subsequent to my formal review of the adult education literature, and discovering the absence of curriculum discourse, I felt as though the very core of my teaching identity had been shaken.

Merging Categories and Distinctions on a Landscape

My teacher journey, described thus far, began in 1979 in community based education in the Ontario community college system. My experience, which began in a *non-formal* classroom situation both informs and directs my inquiry into how teacher identities shape and are shaped by the community college landscape in a changing world. The term non-formal is found in the adult education discourse where distinctions are made between formal, informal and non-formal adult educational contexts (Colletta, 1996). Alex, Larry, Jim and John are all students with whom I worked in assisting, guiding, modeling and teaching life skills and vocational readiness skills basic to finding and keeping employment. Each one of these students was referred to the program by either their probation officers or social assistance workers. The adult program they attended, Basic Job Readiness, was a variant of what Colletta (1996) describes as *non-formal education*:

> In most instances these formulations have reflected concern at the inability of a school-based system to meet adequately the diverse learning needs of a society in change. Non-formal education emerged as a result of the realization that universal compulsory schooling, with its high costs and labour intensive characteristics, is not necessarily the appropriate technology for meeting the diverse learning needs of a developing society (p. 22).

For the first year and a half of my teaching career in adult education, I worked in contract positions at three different community colleges in both rural and urban centers outside the formal institutional structure. Church basements, storefronts and vacant office spaces were the homes for the community based educational programs in which I taught.

Proponents of non-formal education believe that education in non-formal structures permits a "more diverse and flexible deployment of space, time and material" (1996, p. 22). Colleta's distinctions includes the discussion that non-formal education includes a "relaxation of personal qualifications" for the educator (1996, p. 22). In the community college community based situation where I began to teach, teacher education was not required and Colleta's argument was reflected. However, without training as a life skills coach and a university degree I likely would not have been hired.

In later years on the continuum of my teaching journey my experience came to include post-secondary learning, traditional classrooms and administrative structures. When I moved to the post-secondary division of the college my experience reflected formal education and Colleta's description of education that was a, "deliberate and systematic transmission of knowledge, attitudes and skill … an explicit, defined and structured format for space, time, and material, with a set of qualifications for teacher and learner, such as typified in the technology of schooling" (1996, p. 22).

I crossed Colleta's distinction between formal and non-formal education when I moved from occupational and developmental programs into post-secondary teaching on the community college landscape. Essentially, the key distinctions were space and time, and in my earlier experience, I was definitely outside the "academic stream" in terms of community college curriculum subject matter. Our non-formal work with students took on an entirely different rhythm from most other parts of the college. We didn't adopt the time tabling structures of the larger community college system and we designed our own class schedules. Since the Ministries of Colleges and Universities and, the then, Employment and Immigration Canada, funded our programs, we operated differently than most other departments in the college. One of those differences was that we operated all year round, including the summer months.

My stories of actual teaching experience across these distinctions, formal, informal, and non-formal, embrace the uniqueness of each. As my thesis unfolds, similarities and differences among the structural elements of space and time, and the rhythms of each of these theoretical distinctions are threaded throughout my stories about teaching and teacher identity.

An Approach to Becoming a Teacher in a Community Based Program on an Institutional Landscape

Though I sometimes refer to my OCAP placement as an apprenticeship to teaching, I can't say for certain how much actual practice teaching I did. However, the sixteen weeks of student contact, group participation and direct supervision with my supervisors Brenda and Catharine, supported and prepared me for further experience and employment in sessional teaching contracts. These contract positions afforded me the opportunity to work alongside a variety of life skills coaches and experienced community college teachers. This initiation into teaching and working with Brenda and Catharine also separates me from my teacher friends and research colleagues, who, for the most part, are women who teach in elementary and secondary school systems. What I embraced as an apprenticeship feels outside the parameters of teacher education. Though I never attended a teacher education program, I still called myself a teacher.

In 1980, following my work with Brenda and Catharine and after discovering my husband was also shaping another woman's life, I left my two-year marriage and moved to a small city centre, taking on a sessional position as a Life Skills Coach. Leaving my marriage provided me with the freedom to take a teaching position at a rural community college, where I worked for one year. This position presented me with many challenges. One challenge was working alongside a colleague who I perceived as having a rigid value system grounded in religious dogma. My new teaching colleague kept her Bible by her side and I recall how her fingers skillfully leafed through the thin pages of her Bible. Each Bible reading, psalm and proverb was interpreted to the students, during, before, and after class with great certainty. I recall the difficult days of working with her, the sense I had of the power behind her position as lead coach, and how at first, I kept silent. As a young and new teacher to the rural college, I shared my concerns over long-distance telephone conversations with Brenda and Catharine. I wanted to import the pragmatics of my earlier teaching experience into my new teaching situation. Brenda and Catharine both listened to my frustration, and over the telephone supported me in working with the students in the class who did not seem to be under my new colleague's influence. These students made themselves known to me, and with them, after negotiation with my new colleague, I arranged to teach life skills and job readiness in a separate classroom space.

Reflecting on my experience, I realize how highly I regarded my apprenticeship with Brenda and Catharine and the life skills theory and teaching methodology. The training I pursued in life skills coaching and the experiences of its application had been so richly meaningful by this point in my teaching journey that I was convinced of the methodology's effectiveness. Through the life skills training I was introduced to the *DACUM* (Developing a Curriculum), an approach to curriculum that I adopted and maintained for many years (Adams, 1972; Conger, 1970).

On Brenda and Catharine's invitation to return to teaching in their program, I returned to my home city. I joined them for only two months when I received a telephone call about a full-time sessional teaching position I had heard about at a community agency advisory committee meeting. In that telephone call I learned that I had been offered a sessional teaching position at a rural location and distant from another college's institutional landscape. This was to be my third sessional teaching position in a period of a year and a half, but this time the position seemed to carry with it a sense of permanence. I was to become involved not only in teaching, but also in designing and setting up a vocational readiness program for adult students who were preparing for entry and/or reentry into the workplace.

As I reflect on the initial years of my teaching journey and experience, the patterns and unities in my teacher identity already begin to reveal themselves. I notice that my strongest recollections are about troubled students and how their personal lives entered the milieu of the classroom. I learned a great deal from these students and even as I reflect, they are still able to teach me.

One year later, with my shift in 1981 from a sessional teacher to one who obtained full-time status, my teaching assignment didn't change much. I simply shifted classification, and continued the work I was doing teaching and learning with adult men and women in life skills, academic upgrading, job search and vocational planning. I had eighteen teaching hours a week. I was responsible for marketing the program and student intake. My colleague Christina and I interviewed every student who came through the door of the program. Our intake interview consisted of a writing sample, math test, and application form, followed by an intensive interview. In the interview, we learned a great deal about each student, beginning with their past work and school history, their life situation, and why they wanted to enroll in the program. If the student was appropriate and, by our assessment, within the ministry guideline of being approximately sixteen weeks away from vocational readiness, their names were added to the waiting list. Christina and I split our class list in two and met individually in an informal counselling session with every student in the program. The program operated on a continuous intake basis, with students graduating on a Friday afternoon, and individuals from the waiting list taking their seats and beginning on the following Monday.

* * *

Before continuing the narrative of my community based teaching experience, I use the following interim summary to recap the questions and puzzles brought to this thesis.

Interim Summary

To understand the meaning of my knowledge and teaching experience from an earlier time, to an educational landscape that has become quite different, I have entered into a narrative recollection of the inception of my own teaching journey. I have provided my reader with a glimpse into everyday-life activity of a 1979 to an early 1980's-community based educational program. Since, *temporality* is pivotal to narrative inquiry, I am thinking about the connections among individual stories of community college experience, over the continuum of a teaching lifetime, and how these stories collectively shape a teacher's professional identity. Key to making meaning of my narrative history, are the people in my stories and the relationships I had with them at the time. So far in this thesis, I have spoken about my early teaching relationship with three troubled students – Larry, Alex and Jim – and two meaningful and shaping relationships with past mentors, Brenda and Catharine.

Key terms introduced in this thesis are *continuity*, *curriculum*, *experience* and *situation*. I draw on Dewey's (1938) criteria of experience that embraces both continuity and interaction. For Dewey, continuity means that every experience has both temporal and historical factors that are important to understanding the situation. The quality of any single experience is affected by previous experiences and in turn, has the potential to influence future experience. Following Dewey's notions, I embrace the concept that each experience is an individual response to a particular situation, and that all human experience takes place within a social environment. In the same way that society can not be understood without considering people, I accept Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) point about the futility in trying to understand our selves in isolation. Building on Dewey's thinking, Connelly and Clandinin (1988) affirm that "Everyone exists in a situation, and situations are defined, in part, by individuals in interaction with an environment" (p. 79). My thesis follows the notion that the principles of continuity and interaction make it possible for experience to bring about change and affect growth.

I have remarked that the term *curriculum* is not generally used in adult education discourse. In my thinking about teaching and learning in the community college, I embrace curriculum in Dewey's (1938) terms that there is "an organic connection between education and personal experience," (p. 25) and Connelly and Clandinin's broad sense of curriculum "as a person's life experience" (1988, p. 1). The reader will find each of these key terms used throughout my thesis.

So far in this chapter, I have begun to discuss my experience in a non-formal classroom situation. The classrooms I have spoken about were 'off campus,' and physically distanced from the institutional configurations of the college. Colletta's explanation of the value of a non-formal learning situation for adult learners resembles how I remember my past students – Alex, Jim, John and Larry – experiencing their non-traditional learning situation in their program's church basement location. The non-formal teaching experiences that I have spoke about, had a shaping influence on my teacher identity. The following story continues to shed light on the meaning of a community based teaching experience to the professional identity of a community college teacher.

* * *

A Chance Encounter Informs a Teacher's Thesis Journey

Around the same time that I was feeling overwhelmed about having hundreds of teaching experiences to draw from for my thesis, and about how to actually get started with the writing, I encountered a former student. Having just visited with a current student and her field supervisor, I was hurrying through a large suburban mall to meet with a thesis participant for the first time. The chance encounter was the genesis for me making the narrative connection among my stories of teaching experience.

My former student obviously recognized me, too, because when I turned to glance at him, I saw that he too, was looking over his shoulder. Even though I was rushing to meet my current participant, something pulled at me to ask him,

"Do we know one another?"

The tall, lean man, who looked to be around the same age as I was, took two strides in my direction. He was pointing his finger as if to jog his memory, and then he firmly said my name. Feeling relieved that I had not made contact with a 'total' stranger, I breathed a sigh of relief.

As with the other times these sorts of encounters happen in malls, on beaches or in grocery stores, my head swims with the possibilities of events, places, and times in which the person standing before me could fit. "Is he a past colleague?," I wondered. "Perhaps he's a social worker or a teacher? Could it be that we were in a workshop or a course together?"

Still feeling a little embarrassed, I asked the tall, lean man, "Where do we know each other from?"

His face was serious, and his reply seemed to hold an indignant tone. He replied, "B.J.R.T." (Basic Job Readiness Training).

The pieces didn't quite fit together until I asked him his name, to which he replied, Mark. "And your last name?" I tried not to sound as if I had allowed his existence to escape entirely from my mind. The name resonates, and my vague memory of him seems to revive itself as he answered my questions. I asked. He answered. And waited. Silence. *This* is how I remembered Mark. I remembered that he attended every class. He seldom spoke. He was quiet and serious. I recall that he at times spoke in a tone that could find its way to my stomach and jab critically.

Recalling some of Mark's personal struggles, I carefully asked, "How are you doing?" Shrugging one shoulder, he gave me a brief history of his work life. (He secured employment since graduating from the program, driving a bus for a large company.) I suspected he must have made a good vocational choice, as I pictured him driving a bus where he could engage with others on his own terms.

As the conversation, I thought, was coming to an end, Mark surprised me with, "That was some picnic, eh!"

Taken aback, I responded, "oh, what picnic was that?" Again, my memory whirled with images of picnics, places, and people.

"At Mable Beach."

I did remember, and agreed that the Mable Beach Picnic was indeed a good one. In my mind, it was one of best class picnics I had ever attended. I asked Mark if he remembered what year that was.

"Oh, I don't know," Mark responded. "I do know it was the year of the teacher strike."

1984. The first of the two teacher strikes that I remember humbly walking back and forth on the pavement, wearing a placard blocking the wind, that said," QUALITY EDUCATION." The issues were class size and teacher workload.

Tensions on the Landscape

Resonating with memories of the picnic, I think about Mable Lake, which can sometimes be mean and unpredictable. I recall the large onshore waves crashing into the breakwater. The clear blue water is the kind of cold that makes the calves of your legs ache, and typically it takes until August for the icy currents to warm. For years, my parents' and community instilled in me stories about this lake's erratic winds and the bitter currents beneath the blue surface – the white swarms of splashing waters over the submerged rocks. As part of the landscape, Mable Lake possesses an energy and excitement that seems to have existed among students and teachers I have worked with in the past. The lake is also a source of loss and sadness because the shifting winds have created such turbulence that even experienced canoeists have lost their lives. In a similar way that Mable Lake shapes the community, I wonder if a teacher's sense of identity can drown in the waves of institutional tensions, innovative technologies, distance education, and the imposed classroom frameworks?

Revisiting, Re-experiencing, Reliving, Retelling 1984

Meeting Mark was a temporal jog, and his words, "that was some picnic" stayed with me for several days after meeting him in the mall. While writing a description of our brief encounter in a field note, I allowed myself to drift back to 1984. Issues of identity surfaced as a result of the dissonance between the practice of adult education and the theoretical literature. Reflecting back, the 1984 landscape seemed supportive to my teaching situation and the work I did with students like Mark who intended to use the program offerings in English and math upgrading, vocational decision making, and life skills enhancement to change their lives.

Not wanting to let go of the emotions I felt after my chance encounter with Mark, I sought an opportunity between field placement visits to drive to the site of the picnic at Mable Beach. To prepare for my brief visit to the beach I picked up a cup of coffee from the small store adjacent to the park alongside the lakeshore. As I sat on a large beach rock, I wrote in my journal:

> *The store and snack bar did not exist in 1984. When I asked the owner how long his store was here, he said one year. I'm trying to picture what was in its place. As I sit here, I can't help but wonder how I might appear to others - me, a well-dressed woman in her tailored dress coat sitting on this rock, on a cool day in early November. If anyone should ask, I would explain that I am deliberately sitting here to take my mind back in time. I would say that I want to prevail on, and maybe even relive my fond memories of the 1984 class picnic. (Journal F, November 5, 1997).*

I wondered what people passing by almost fourteen years ago thought when they observed a group of adults of various ages, shapes and sizes, romping on the beach and through the treed park adjacent the lake on the other side of the roadway. As I sat writing, the movement of the water and the sound of the waves across the small pebbles on the beach provided an *aural dimension* (Crites, 1986) as I remembered the students in my class:

> *Some students were on the beach. Others were playing baseball. The summer day wasn't too much warmer than it feels today. I am struck by my fond memories of the past students. I also remember how concerned I was about one student. My image of him is clear, but I can't remember his name. The wind on my face and the chill in the air reminds me of how he could have changed, and spoiled, the whole day because of his drunkenness. Looking towards the large body of water, to the point where he stood, remembering him with his shirt off, his denims heavy with water, I also recall feeling thankful for the support of the other students, and my colleague, Susan, and how we pulled together in such a matter-of-fact fashion to get him out of the water. When it was time to eat, I remember the generous quantities of salad, bread, cheese and meat covering the tops of two picnic tables pulled together. I'm certain that someone even remembered to bring a tablecloth. The day felt like a celebration. For Mark the picnic was memorable. What I remember of the picnic is a small public beach on a large lake outside of the city. The students picked the site and planned the activities for the day. Many of the students knew the park well, and for them I had the sense of their personal histories holding stories that blended with the hospitable texture of the day's picnic. (Journal F, November 15, 1997).*

For me, often times the sound of water movement or pouring liquid will invoke in me feelings of aloneness. The crisp sounds of Mable Lake as the water glided over the pebbles resonated with the feelings of aloneness I sometimes experience since shifting across the landscape boundary from community based education into the post-secondary sector. Following Crites' (1986) notion of claiming a memory about identity and selfhood, the shoreline sounds provoked, and also symbolized, a visceral level of seclusion in terms of myself as a teacher on the current post-secondary, community college landscape.

My early teaching experience working closely with the students who entered into the Basic Job Readiness program, carved out for me my understanding of what Cranton (1992) describes as the autonomous relationship between my students and me in the context of a student / teacher relationship. I embraced Cranton's notion of autonomy between the student and the educator, perhaps naively, but as a teaching rule. This rule was further endorsed by a philosophy of the female educators I taught with in the first eight years of my teaching career. Somehow, perhaps magically, but also because Christina and I had the autonomy to interview and hire our teaching colleagues, we chose people who thought like us.

The nature of an autonomous relationship between a former student and myself is revealed in my gift from Alice.

A Gift from Alice

My life had taken several formations since working with Alice. It was a miracle her letter found its way to me. Over time I had received many letters from students and colleagues that moved me and touched me in special ways. But this letter felt different. The hand written note, in calligraphic style tucked inside a beautiful baroque card read, "Dream and wonderful things can happen," with the added inscription in calligraphic pen from Alice, saying, "Bev, This is an appreciation note to a friend who helped and influenced me to grow. Thank you for your wisdom and your support," In her letter to me she wrote:

April 11, '91'

Dear Bev;

... I've come a long way since seeing you last, grown up quite a bit.

I'm reading this great book on caring for self and others. One of the exercises in it was to write an appreciation note to all those who have been a positive influence on your heart. This is written with deep appreciation for your influence, insight and support to me when I did not have the knowledge or the skills to cope with my changing life.

Only by chance, I ended up in your class and that really was the turning-point

of my life. To change is so hard and yet I changed my thoughts, my goals, my daily routine. So frequently now I wonder what the problem was so long ago. To keep you up to date; ... Bev, I've grown so much, feeling confident knowing what I'm doing in the business ...I'm driving in the daylight—my eyes, my health, my energy are 90% improved. I talk to a group of 50 people on a bus about this historical hamlet. I'm teaching a stencil class, $100 a day. This recession has made me finds other ways to promote business and myself.

> *So you see, your seeds have grown and I do so appreciate your efforts in planting them. I hope happiness is there for you. I'm finding it within myself. Thanks to you,*
>
> *Sincerely, Ali*

Alice's letter to me, in the context of my thesis inquiry, becomes field text. When I received the letter I had just returned from a teaching assignment in Lahr, Germany. I called the correspondence I received from Alice a miracle letter because my return to that former address was unanticipated. It felt as though Alice's letter had found me in spite of all the turmoil in my life at that time. Her letter felt like a very special gift.

Each time I read Alice's letter I am pulled back in time. When I received and read the letter in 1991, I was not thinking in narrative terms or about this thesis inquiry. Cranton's (1991) theoretical notion about autonomy between the educator and the learner challenged me to think about my relationships with students and I reached for my teaching memory box. Re-reading the letter and thinking about inquiry spaces, I asked a number of narrative questions. I wondered, how, as a younger and less experienced teacher, did I see Alice? Who was Alice in relation to the curriculum? What narrative threads brought Alice to the life skills and vocational readiness program?

As I continued my research, I stitched together my story of Alice in my own memory. Other than the letter she wrote me, I had no concrete field texts to draw on. I can only tell my teaching story of Alice from a "temporal and spatial and bodily distance" (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000, p. 58). The re-shaping of my memory has a social-personal dimension. Soon after settling into my new home after returning to Canada from Germany, I thought about connecting with Alice. For some reason, at the time, I felt more compelled to visit her small store in the hamlet she wrote about rather than respond to her in writing. My memory of my visit to her store on a warm summer day is patched into remembering travelling with my cousin in her then boyfriend's MGB sports car with the roof down. We drove the service roads and ate lunch in a quaint country inn close to the store. I remember entering into Alice's shop that was originally a two-story schoolhouse. Alice was not there, however, her warmth, genuiness, and creativity seemed to be everywhere.

Patching together the fragments of my teacher story, my visit, and the concreteness of the letter, I tell the following recollection. Alice was in my class in 1988, just a few months before I transferred into the post-secondary sector of the college. The student list was divided among the teaching faculty so that each student received individual counselling, as well as being in each of our classes. I was Alice's counsellor. At the time Alice, a mother of two adolescent children, came to our program during a distressed period in her life. Her husband, a retired administrator in education, left Alice and her children to be with a much younger woman. At this time in her life, Alice was also dealing with a great deal of uncertainty about maintaining her eyesight. I recall her oscillating hope and the fears she expressed about continuing her work as an artist.

I thought many times about writing to Alice. So much time had passed since seeing her and receiving her letter that I held little hope of ever finding her. But in the spirit of miracles I decided to write. What follows is an excerpt from my letter to Alice:

October 16, 2000

Dear Ali,

As I write you I am settling into a Chicago hotel restaurant. I am trying to imagine your response when you receive this letter from me. Let me begin by telling you I retrieved the letter that you wrote to me in October 1991 from a special place. I call this place my teacher memory box. Your letter to me has become an artifact and field text for the doctoral thesis I am currently writing.

I want to tell you the ways that your 1991 letter brought meaning to my life. In 1989 – not long after you were a student in my class - I moved into a college administrative position, which was followed shortly by a request to coordinate and teach in community college programs on an armed forces base in Germany. I jumped at the opportunity to leave my life in Canada and live a European experience. While setting up new programs, recruiting students, and teaching during the weekdays I travelled extensively through Europe on the weekends. I worked and played hard, got quite sick, and felt absolutely horrible about having to return home to Canada prematurely. I was eventually diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome.

You might empathize with my disappointment. I am reminded of some of the difficulties in your life when you were a student in my classroom. I remember your fear about the possibility of losing your eyesight.

On returning home, and this is where your letter comes in, I had little certainty about where I was going to live. I had given up my apartment, my fiancée, and my new job in administration. I returned to Canada on a scary military flight to Ottawa, and then into Toronto, where seeing the CN Tower actually warmed my heart.

After living through a period of bunking at other people's places, I finally landed back at the apartment complex I left prior to my leave-taking, but with a much smaller apartment. This time around there was no fresh paint or wallpaper, and no view of the ravine. Soon after I arrived home I was robbed and some of the special things I brought home from Europe were stolen.

I was having a very disappointing time all round. Then your letter arrived. I coined the term "miracle letter" because it felt as if the words and your connection came at a time when I was feeling quite lost.

I have thought about writing you a number of times. The puzzles that I have about a community college educator's professional identity took me back to my teacher memory box and your letter. The questions that I bring to my thesis are the catalyst for my writing to you now. I have been thinking about relationships in teaching – relationships between students and educators, and educators and their colleagues. Some of the adult education literature suggests the relationship between educators and their students should be autonomous. In the first eight years of my teaching and up until I moved into the post-secondary sector of the college, I sought, and I believe for the most part, found autonomous relationships with the students I worked with in the classroom.

I was wondering if you have reflected and thought about when you were a student returning to the classroom after being out of school for a number of years. I can still picture the classroom that you were in. The way my memory has it, you sat mostly to the right side of the curve in the u-shaped classroom chair formation. I remember the faces of the two women with whom you spent your time. Kate, the swimmer, and I've forgotten the name of the other woman, though I can still picture her face. Perhaps you remember the laughter in the class, and how sometimes a student named Pete used to make us all laugh. I also remember a class session on loneliness, and that, on some days, there were also tears.

Several months after receiving your letter after I was up and around again, I intentionally sought you out. I visited your store. I remember the gift that I purchased for my sister who was having her first baby. Perhaps the woman at the cash passed on my message.

As I write to you, I have considered the multiple dimensions there are to this letter and the one you wrote to me nine years ago. I am reminded about the complexity of each of our lives, and also of the complexity of classroom life. This is partly what my thesis is about. I won't go on since this letter has already become longer than I intended. Perhaps you'll read this letter in bite-size pieces, or when you have a quiet moment to yourself.

Alice's letter is in contrast to some of the teaching stories of experience I talk about further in this thesis.

At Home with Dewey in Newstart: Subject Matter

Beginning with my initial orientation to teaching in community based programs within the non-formal educational program in the institutional structure of the community college system, I readily adopted the Deweyian perspective (1938) that the school is a form of community life. My initial teaching experiences in community based programs provided the students and myself with continuity between the home environment and the school situation. The curriculum and teaching methodology was real and vital. I utilized the Newstart Life Skills teaching model that I encountered during an intensive Life Skills Coach training program. I embraced this program as replacing the teacher education program I declined. My initial teaching experience with Newstart Life Skills was partnered with a counselling modality. Just as Dewey (1938) sees it, the subject matter of a life skills education program is a process of living and moral training. The Newstart (1973) definition of life skills are "problem solving behaviours appropriately and responsibly used in the management of personal affairs" (p. 1). As outlined in the Newstart literature, the curriculum in life skills consists of five key categories: self, family, job, community and leisure. The life experiences of the students within these five categories were the foundation for learning problem solving skills and applying them to real-life situations within the classroom setting. The classroom experience was applied directly to the students' life situation both inside and outside the college milieu. Lessons in problem-solving behaviours evolved from the student's issues and concerns with their real-life experiences. Turning again to Dewey's (1939) notion of *human communities*, which come into being with interconnected action, and communication as the "most wonderful of affairs" (p. 385), our students were encouraged to connect, and explore with others their personal experiences as they related to their lives at home and in the workplace. Problems or challenges the students were encountering in their personal lives outside the five categories also became part of the course content.

Following Dewey's (Dewey and Ratner, 1939) distinction between "joint activity" as a condition of the creation of a community and "communal life" (p. 387), students were encouraged to bring their emotional and intellectual selves into the classroom. Personal resources and newly acquired skills of the students were continually utilized in the application of group problem-solving skills for the resolution of the shared problem.

There was ongoing evaluation of the students' application of skills throughout the entire process. This evaluation was for the most part, informal and took on many forms. We met students individually and in case conferences. My teaching colleagues and I also entered into conversations with the students and their referring worker. Through written and verbal feedback sessions in the life skills, job search and vocational exploration components, students received many opportunities to see themselves through the eyes of their peers. Students often saw themselves through the lens of the video camera, which was used on a regular basis to offer feedback.

Dewey's notion that "There is no mystery about the fact of association, of an interconnected action which affects the activity of singular elements" (1939, p. 365) follows my initial orientation to teaching, which was the application and bridging of the outside and inside situation. The following classroom story, telling about a student who brings a real-life dilemma into the classroom community, captures Dewey's notion about the interconnection between action and association.

> *Judy was a small woman. Her face was thin and she had tired eyes. Her skin tone was light with freckles, no make-up and her hair tucked behind her ears to keep it from falling into her eyes.*
>
> *The content of the life skills class was the five-step problem-solving model. In order to put the model to the test, and allow the students to apply it, I asked for a volunteer to share a problem for our application. Judy, who was the newest student in this continuous intake program, volunteered her problem.*
>
> *During the process of attempting to define the problem Judy shared that her boyfriend, whose name she withheld, was in prison at the present time and about to be released. I don't recall all of his crimes, but he was charged with bodily and physical assault toward Judy. Judy told us she knows that her boyfriend has a gun and she fears that he will come looking for her when he gets out of jail.*
>
> *During the information gathering stage of the problem-solving model I was beginning to feel afraid*

that I was in this over my head. I remember thinking, 'here we have a very frightened woman, of whom I knew nothing, telling us she knew she was going to be hunted down and killed.'

The session was exhausting. I remember noticing that all of the students were engaged in this woman's terrible dilemma. She trusted no one. She did not trust the police and her experience was that peace bonds don't work. She had every confidence that her boyfriend would find out where she was. (She had just moved to this community to maintain her anonymity.) As she described her life, that of a woman owned by a motor cycle gang to which her boyfriend belonged.

There appeared to be no way out. It was easy to empathize with her pain and sense of being trapped. I recall trying to keep a balance in the group, conscious that her story not take the life out of the discussion.

During the telling of the story, Judy began to shake and cry. We allowed her. She told the group that she has never felt support and kindness like this before. As she spoke, she sobbed. Though she did not disclose names and specific details - she was very street smart and she saw danger in disclosing - she started to hear, and seemed to accept, support from some of the men and women in the group. I remember there being 'an energy' in the group that I have never come to experience again.

It felt like there was a collective experience of a wide range of emotions. The morning session spilled over into the students' lunch hour and no one seemed to notice. The challenge for me was to establish closure - when and how can I pull this ' energy' back in, meet some of Judy's needs, the needs of the group and even my own needs? (I was exhausted - the kind when I feel I could cry.) As the session was wrapping

> *up, I recall one of my male colleagues entering the room and saying something like "Wow! You can really feel the energy in here!" He opened his arms and gave me a huge hug. I needed that. (OISE Course 1300, Audiotape Transcription, July 1995).*

Though I considered myself a teacher, as did my students, the Newstart literature that I was introduced to in 1979, used the term *life skills coach* (Training Research and Development Station, 1973). This was an attempt to breach the distance between the adult student and the educator, especially for learners with histories of negative school and learning experiences, which were deemed unsuccessful. I began to think of myself as a facilitator of change, a change agent. For many of these learners, teachers and formal learning environments still held negative connotations, and for this reason, the job readiness programs were housed off campus.

When I was teaching and learning with students like Mark, Alice and Judy, I participated in the formation of the social life of the classroom similar to what Dewey describes in *My Pedagogical Creed* (1938). The creed or belief is the vehicle Dewey uses to explain that education is the ongoing interaction of the individual and the social conditions of the community life that encompasses the individual. As a social servant and a member of the community, the teacher ensures that the students' natural powers are channeled. Education is seen as a process of living, a continuing reconstruction of experience. Through exposure to the "experience," or the subject matter in academic upgrading, life skills and career exploration, individuals like Mark, Alice and Judy grew, progressed, and emerged as a moral member of the community.

Looking Back at Utopia

I have often referred to the teaching environment in the community based education situation I transferred from as an utopian teaching experience. Our community based program was off site and we had little to do with the daily politics of the main campus. My colleague Christina and I originally developed the program, so we were able to build on our own vision of a learning environment. We ran our own show, designed our own curriculum, and wrote our own policies attendance guidelines, selection criteria and negotiation of student exit. We chose and hired our own staff only after observing and working with them first.

One woman we hired, during her 'audition class' for a teaching position, was successful using her own teaching style of tapping into the repressed energy level of some of the more lethargic students in our vocational program. Susan magically moved the inactive students to physically participate in an uninhibited and open fashion. As a result of her encouragement, one of the students became so uninhibited he put his foot through a wall. (He didn't hurt himself.) We decided we liked Susan's style, how she handled the chaos that transpired from the 'wall thing,' and the impact of the openness in which she moved her body across the classroom. She was different from the rest of the teachers we had on board already. So we hired Susan based on our own criteria: what the program needed, what the students needed, what we needed, and what she knew how to do. Having the luxury of hiring our own staff and keeping our program intact and separated from the larger institution, we were able to nurture a strong team approach in maintaining the integrity of the program. We also considered as part of our team the workers who referred students to the program and the advisory committee members who stood behind us when the program was threatened by fiscal restraints.

Teaching colleagues, like Brenda and Catharine, whom I have worked with in the community based educational programs, treated me with respect and positive regard. The nature of these collegial relationships gave me cause to feel valued as a colleague, an educator and a learner, which easily permitted me to hold my colleagues in high regard. As I review my teaching stories, patterns and narrative unities, I can see that the early experiences of working with individual student resistance to learning and change provided me a practical and valuable learning experience that I continued to draw on for my teaching. The first three years of my teaching journey instilled in me the value of communication, respect and trust among teachers working together. I came to teaching accepting the concept of team teaching; it wasn't until I entered the post-secondary sector that I experienced the isolation I came to hear so many teachers talk about. Interestingly, as I continued my teaching journey by moving to full-time status, neither my sessional or OCAP experience were considered relevant in the calculation of my starting salary. I didn't notice at the time however, because all I was thinking about was the opportunity to begin my own life skills program.

During the first eight years, I worked alongside mostly women teachers. The community based programs we started together were perceived by employers, referral agents and the funding source, as successful and as making a difference to the community and to the lives of the students who entered the programs. Our teaching center grew to include two additional programs and the eventual addition of the continuing education division.

A Teacher Readily Embraces Life Skills Theoretical Perspectives

As a twenty-one year old teacher, working with my students like Larry and Alex, I felt as though I had few experiences that were, in Dewey's terms, "educative" to guide me through practice and interactions. My undergraduate degree in sociology, with courses in deviant behaviour, variant family forms, and the sociology of aging, did not prepare me to work with these initial students. The intensity of the life skills coach training course that I took over weekends, provided me with the opportunity to work alongside others who were mostly older, and from my perspective, more experienced in the field of working with students who were considered nontraditional learners.

Why I Tell My Story

With the theoretical underpinnings of Dewey (1964, 1958, 1938), Connelly and Clandinin (2000,1995,1988), I found myself making connections between my past and present life experiences. Teaching stories, reconstructed, bring meaning to how I embraced teaching and learning relationships, classrooms as community and *curriculum as lived experience*. As I thought about early stories and moved across the continuum of my teaching journey, students, women educators who were friends, teaching colleagues and mentors from across three different community college landscapes have been described as having taken part in the shaping of my teacher identity. *Life skills coach, teacher, facilitator of change,* and *educator* are all terms that have shaped my teacher identity over time. Through these connections and reconstructed stories, I have come to understand that the relationships between people, subject matter and milieu, are closely tied to my teacher identity.

At the same time, I am perplexed about the apparent restrictions that hamper the teachers and students knowing one another. I am interested in the meaning of this perplexity as it pertains to the evolving identities of the teacher and their relationships with their students and the community college milieu. I am also questioning how it matters that teachers know who they are, and how that knowing impacts the classroom. Community college teacher identity is not talked about in the adult education or higher education literature.

Through this narrative inquiry, I delve into stories of experience that enhance my understanding of the temporal construction of my teacher identity on a community college landscape. My inquiry is situated in my own experience of twenty-years, teaching on a changing community college landscape. In this beginning chapter, I have storied how, as a beginning and untrained teacher, I readily embraced theories in adult education. These theories shaped my teaching practice on the community college landscape. My sense of who I am as a community college teacher is also shaped by my adoption of these adult education theoretical perspectives. Teaching and learning stories and the life experiences of post-secondary teachers and students who live on the community college landscape are not, for the most part, included in the adult education or higher education theoretical literature. Generally, community colleges are not embraced by the discourse in adult education theoretical literature. In higher education literature, community colleges are included in the discourse, but the focus is primarily from a historical and policy perspective.

Chapter Summary

Stories told in this chapter embrace a community based education teaching experience. I have written about the inception of my teaching journey and my relationships with five previous students – Alex, Jim, John, Alice and Judy. I introduced Brenda, Catharine and Christina – colleagues I worked with in church basements, storefronts and post-office buildings, leased by, however off, the formal terrain of the community college. The stories within my narrative moved forward from 1979 to 1984 and included teaching experiences at three different community colleges. I described a surprise encounter with a previous student that helped to jog my memory about an out-of-classroom experience on the shoreline of Mable Lake. From my brief conversation with Mark, I felt inspired to visit the beach-site to recapture my memories of a picnic experience nine-years earlier. My brief visit, affirming my memory of the lake's forceful currents, reminded me of the collaborative atmosphere among past students who seemed to be eager to support and teach one another. Remembering the 1984 picnic brought to mind the perspective that our students, for the most part, graduated with skills and characteristics that would help them procure employment.

In chapter one, I tell about hiring my colleague Susan. Further to writing about the picnic and the 1984 classroom experiences, I met Susan at an AERA conference in New Orleans, in April of year 2000. Over dinner, I spoke about my thesis and shared my reconstructed student stories. The 1984 picnic was a part of her memory too, and she specifically recalled that someone *did* remember to bring a tablecloth. After agreeing to read my reconstruction of our shared teaching experience, I received the following email note from Susan, who wrote:

> Hi, Bev: I have just found the right mood and time to read a good part of your chapter. I wanted to be in the right space, as I knew it would awaken memories and also wondered how you perceived me at that time. Would I be pleased or hurt? Either way, I knew I would learn something. In response, I find myself very moved and I'm crying. I am certainly not hurt but glad how my true intention of how I wanted to be with students came through to you at that time. I have never felt understood and it is very moving to see how much you did see my intention and can attest to its reasonable success. Thank you. … Re Mark, I don't have a clear memory of him but I do have a strong sense of the emotions of that day. … Re the person in the water, I do vaguely recollect the incident, but more so my bones remember the worry about the levels of self control ominous in a public place where we could not have our usual kind of influence to calm and anchor the desperation. I use "we" because I sense you felt the way I did…am I right? …

Susan's email response is a "*narrative sign*" about my past teaching experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Previously unknown to me, was the uncertainty Susan referred to feeling about the acceptance of her teaching style. Her doubtfulness prompts a deeper narrative understanding about the 1984-teaching environment. However, the unities within our individual memories of a shared temporal environment, apparent in Susan's email reply, points to the sense of safety I previously felt in teamwork and collegial support –(like on the day Susan and I worked together with our students at Mable Beach).

I have written metaphorically about the sounds and motions of Mable Lake, evoking feelings of aloneness that resemble my responses to teaching in post-secondary education that followed my teaching experience in a community based situation. By way of my 1979-to-1988 memories, in Crites' (1986) terms, I am able to claim *selfhood.* The stories that I have told in this chapter, are stories that came to guide my practice and my classroom life. Heilburn (1988) proposes that stories *form us*. Clandinin and Connelly refer to such stories as "stories to live by" that compose and shape a teacher's identity. My stories of experience situated during this temporal period, also embraced collegiality and working closely with colleagues. As colleagues, we planned, designed and taught together. We supported and learned from one another – I didn't feel alone with my students on the shores of Mable Lake.

My early teaching experiences in the community based education context discussed so far, approximate the autonomous teacher/student relationship, theorized by Brundage and Mackeracher (1980) and Cranton (1992), consequently, further endorsing my acceptance of the adult education literature. However, my past student/teacher relationship with Mark, does not reflect an autonomous relationship comparable to how I felt working with Alice when she was a student in my classroom. The notion of autonomous relationships in adult education is situational and does not apply to *all* teacher/student relationships.

Throughout the telling and retelling of my beginning stories in teaching, a new story unfolds. Through narrative inquiry I delve into the temporal and textured space of my teaching experience. I explore the shift from someone who felt confident about her application of selected theories in adult education, to someone who grounds this thesis in questions relating to her earlier convictions. With my entry into this study of the community college landscape and teacher identity, I have begun to feel uncertain about earlier teaching stories of conviction and begin to question the relationship of adult education theories to actual classroom practice.

Alice's letter, tucked away safely in my teaching memory box, brings meaning to my story about teaching. The letters that I include in this chapter, capture the interchange among people and events in the classroom and a conversational tone among students and their teachers. Perhaps Alice is an example of an ideal student, however, my memory of her stands in stark contrast to the changed student relationships in the more current community college classroom. My relationship with Alice, and other students, had a shaping influence on my hope for teaching and learning with students in the post-secondary community college context.

In the second half of chapter one, I spoke about my adoption of the Newstart Life Skills teaching model. This model, grounded in the conception of *balanced self-determinism* (1980), encompasses the personal and vocational life in the students' future. The model, a five-step process, embraces problem-solving and embodies many of Dewey's ideas about education: school is a form of communal life; scientific inquiry (more about this in chapter four); a process of living and moral training; interconnected actions in the classroom; and continuity between the classroom and home. It was my hope that the transcribed excerpt and story about Judy's complex personal problem, shared in the Life Skills class, provided a glimpse into the curriculum lived out in the community based classroom atop the town's post-office. The classroom took on the characteristics of Dewey's learning lab. (I discuss Dewey's learning lab in chapter four.) The communicative atmosphere and the students' determination to listen and work through Judy's life problem shaped my optimism around classrooms resembling communal life.

Chapter one has been about one woman's beginning in *becoming a teacher* (Aitken, 1994) on the community college landscape. I have written about my introduction to the interconnection between experience through my apprenticeship with Brenda and Catharine, alongside my participation in Newstart Life Skills Coach Training and its focus on principles specific to experiential adult education. I spoke about adopting these notions, with ease, into my early classroom experiences with my students.

So far, I have told stories of experience on the continuum of my teaching journey, beginning in 1979, stopping at 1984 and again in 1988, when I shifted from community based to post secondary education.

* * *

In chapter two, *In, Out, Forward and Back: Looking Through the Lens of the Innu Women's' Visit*, I provide an account of a 1999 classroom session. My classroom story is drawn from journal entries and field notes. The purpose of sharing this narrative is to move along the continuum of my teacher journey and delve into the temporality of a 1999 post secondary community college classroom context. In this story, the flavour and texture of my teaching journey shifts. Classrooms are larger, relationships among faculty are more distant and overtones of community among the students are more muted. Often times the curriculum feels increasingly cumbersome. The teacher's desire to draw on previous knowledge from an earlier time is hindered by obstacles and shifting fragments on-and-off-the landscape.

With border crossings between the philosophical boundaries of community based to post-secondary education, my teacher identity begins to feel less certain. Through my inquiry into the narrative of own teaching experience, the certainty of my teacher identity has the sense of unravelling. As my thesis proceeds, I discover that my certainty was experienced within a pre-narrative interpretation and a cover story embedded in my acceptance sacred theoretical notions about teaching adult learners. My beginning teaching years continue to be written about and are touchstones in the next chapter as I move back and forth between the 1999 classroom story and my recollections of earlier teaching experiences. Chapter two raises questions about the practicality and the value of taking actual community experience into a classroom situated on a community college terrain. Questions about the similarities and differences among educators, who teach in formal and informal contexts, are bought to the forefront, raising many questions about the value of the theoretical distinctions discussed throughout the adult education literature. As well, the chapter identifies disruptions on the landscape and how experience is shaped for the people living on that landscape.

Chapter Two

Crossing the Border into Post-Secondary Education

In 1988, I made the shift from teaching in life skills and community based programs located off campus, to teach in the post-secondary division of the college. At this time, I began teaching in a Helping Profession two-year diploma program that was located in a small, but central campus in a large city centre. The students were among the surprises in my transition from the developmental/occupational division to the Helping Profession program in the post-secondary section of the college. I had anticipated that students who were studying to become helping professionals would be as motivated, mature and as somewhat sophisticated in their approach to learning as were the students who I worked with previously. What I encountered was much different than what I expected.

In this chapter I write about my beginning experience teaching in post-secondary, my expectations and my discoveries. I move along the continuum of my teaching journey, to recount one particular classroom experience on a cold 1999 January morning following a three-week winter break. It is my hope that the reader will gain a beginning appreciation of the curriculum of the Helping Profession program. Chapter two includes my teacher thinking and planning, and the playing out of a specific classroom visit in explicit narrative detail. This classroom session includes four visiting women speakers who tell their stories about advocacy and Innu life. The women speak directly to my students about the work they do to advocate and protect their culture from extinction. I chose to write about this particular classroom event because of its deep resonance to the patterns and rhythms of earlier times in my teaching life both on and off the community college landscape. By way of looking through the lens of the Innu women's visit I move temporally back and forth on the continuum of my teaching journey, and interweave a number of experiences.

Out-of-Bounds in Post-Secondary Education

The program I transferred into, in 1988, was troubled by a negative history, unresolved issues and a lack of vision with regard to the fluid directions of the larger social community. One college teacher had mysteriously been let go; another had resigned in protest. Several years before, the senior administration of the college had elected to close the program, for reasons that were not clearly defined.

In addition, I realized I had, as my colleagues put it, 'the-class-from-hell,' - the students no one wanted to work with. The classroom situation felt volatile and full of negative emotion. I recall that, as I initially struggled through the curriculum left to me by a former colleague, the distance between the learners and myself was vast.

When it occurred to me that the students did not trust me, just as they did not trust the other faculty, I decided to draw on the life skills methodology that I thought I had shelved when I left the developmental and occupational division of the college. As a result, I learned about the transferability of the Newstart life skills methodology. The life skills model embraces the notion that students' stories of experience are the curriculum, thereby allowing life experience to enter into the classroom.

In a similar way that I fell into community college teaching, I synchronously discovered Brundage and Mackeracher's (1980) *Principles of Adult Learning* among the course materials left behind in the office I inherited from a former colleague. Drawing on adult education principles, my former colleague had incorporated Brundage and Mackeracher's standards into her curriculum. I confidently incorporated Brundage and Mackeracher's thinking and standards into my teaching practice. Based on Brundage and Mackeracher's definition of adult learning, that follows,

> Both the process that individuals go through as they attempt to change or enrich their knowledge, values, skills, or strategies, and the resulting knowledge, values, skills, strategies, and behaviours possessed by each individual (1980, p. 5).

I readily accepted that hopes, expectations and the student's future were a part of the curriculum. I effortlessly embraced Brundage and Mackeracher's view that it is the teacher and the learner who share the responsibility for classroom interaction. Reflecting on my community based teaching experiences, this made sense to me because I realized after spending time in the classroom, that I could not do it alone. I closely followed and honoured the authors' position that the learning situation is about experience for the learner *and* the teacher. The theoretical writings seemed to reflect how my colleagues, Brenda, Catharine, Christina and Susan, worked with their students in the adult learning situations I experienced in the previous years of my teaching journey.

In, Out, Forward and Back: Looking Through the Lens of the Innu Women's Classroom Visit

The story of Elizabeth's visit to my classroom in 1999, is shared as a way to begin my discussion and inquire into how the experience of adult educators who work in informal teaching and learning contexts, resemble the work-life of community college teachers in a changing social world. I am inquiring into the theoretical distinctions among formal, informal and non-formal experiences. For my inquiry, I thought about my response to the day, what followed, and why this visit had become so visceral and central enough in my mind that I wanted to write about it. My story of the Innu women's visit to my classroom is a pivotal experience for me because I came to realize it is a way of seeing what I *want* to be true in terms of the *classroom as community*, and experience as education.

The first story I tell moves spatially through the course of the morning. I begin with a one-hour car ride to the log cabin/classroom where a two-hour session occurs. This is followed by a reconstructed kitchen-lunch conversation that provokes questions and puzzles about teacher identity, and working toward community and relationship with students and colleagues on and off the landscape. Throughout this narrative I introduce some of the tensions and dilemmas lived out on a community college landscape.

A Car Conversation Among Formal and Non-formal Educators

I met the two Innu women, Elizabeth and Nympha, for the first time while sitting snugly in the back seat of Audrey's small station wagon. Five women, Audrey, Kari, Elizabeth, Nympha, and myself were heading north on the highway towards the log cabin on the college campus. The car conversation was easy, with some gentle hints of anxiety about introductions and suitable allotments of time each person should speak during the two-hour class. Quietly from the driver's seat, I heard Audrey ask, "What shall I say when I introduce you? Should I say that I have known you for ten years and that you have stayed with Elizabeth in her tent?" Elizabeth turned from her quiet conversation in her own language with Nympha, and as she touched Kari's shoulder, added, "and you went into the bush. Remember Kari?" I sensed a deep sense of pride in her question. As I observed the women I noted how Audrey, Elizabeth, Kari, and Nympha teach and support one other. I heard that Elizabeth had invited Kari into the dailiness of her life so that she could learn about the Innu. In exchange, Kari supports Elizabeth's dream, and assists with this tour. There were moments in the car ride when I found myself feeling touched by an overwhelming sense of resonance to how, in my past, I used to teach and work alongside my women colleagues.

When arrangements were made, I had no idea that their visit would provoke feelings in me that were uncomfortable and at first, seemingly ungrounded. The visit stirred me and for this reason I knew I had to write about it. Originally, it was my intention to write about their visit with the objective of having their story told to a larger audience. In terms of educating others in the community, I thought of the visitors to my classroom as adult educators in the informal sense. They are teaching and learning on a landscape beyond the walls of formal institutional learning environments. As I wrote, I found myself making connections to past experiences in teaching that I wanted to explore more deeply.

A Log Cabin as Classroom: Connections to Past Teaching

I didn't want to invite my guests into the bleakness of the 1970's style brown brick building where I usually teach. With its concrete block walls painted white, it feels stifling and confining to me, especially in contrast to the woods, fields, and rolling hills of the campus. With the confirmation of Elizabeth and Nympha's travel plans, I sought out an alternative to the glossy painted walls of the rectangular, windowless classroom. From a woman whose task it is to arrange classroom times and spaces, I requested one of two spaces that appealed to me as a workable esthetic for the atmosphere I wanted to create. She agreed that the 'pavilion' or the 'log cabin' would suit my purpose. Both buildings, tucked in opposite corners on the campus landscape, are wooded, and have large stone fireplaces. I thought of the parallel to my beginning years in teaching at three different community colleges, when I worked in small intimate, off-campus spaces tucked in corners of the community, teaching adults in program spaces housed in church basements and on top of post offices.

With the quiet hum of the car conversation around me as we drove north, I visualized the actual setup of the log cabin. I was hopeful that a roaring fire in the fireplace was going to be more than just a promise. The session, as I imagined it, had us five women sitting slightly to the right of the fireplace. I was hoping for full student attendance, that the class would start on time and that the students would agree to place them selves close by the panel. Not uncommonly, and likely because this was 'a one-time visit only,' I was feeling that time was very precious. Once I anticipated this perfect teaching and learning situation in my mind, I was brought up short by realizing that I had forgotten my camera. I had wanted to capture the students as I imagined, as if I wanted to hold onto this image of them listening to the life experiences of the Innu who had travelled so far from Labrador to tell their stories. I inquired if anyone else remembered to bring a camera. Audrey responded that she did, but it was at home, and everyone in the car chuckled. It was also as if I wanted to capture, what was in my mind, a perfect teaching and learning situation perhaps like the images in photographs of teaching situations taken earlier. The photographs collected over time form a collage containing images of people, places and events that are on a continuum of my teaching experience from 1981 to 1990. Captured are images of teacher seminars, teacher celebrations, and shared student/ teacher Christmas and graduation parties. Smaller group portraits capture open houses, student orientations, and reunions. As well, there are pictures of various classroom settings with students engaged in role-plays, group work, and in conversation with one another.

* * *

As arranged, Audrey picked me up at 7:40 am and we reached the campus' log cabin in good time. We were the first to arrive before any of the students or the other two faculty members. I felt great relief at the women's reaction to the log cabin. Everyone seemed delighted. As we walked through the door, hearing the sounds of the creaking wood from underneath our winter footwear, the warmth and the crackling sounds of the burning logs in the fireplace filled the air. For the formal and non-institutional worlds of adult education and its educators to meet, the simple, but comfortable environment – the genuine atmosphere of the cabin set in the woods, and the warmth of the fire provided an alternate space to the synthetic attributes of the classroom.

When they entered the cabin, Elizabeth and Nympha walked directly towards the fire. As she took in the cabin space, Elizabeth said that she would love to *live* in a cabin like this. I took this to be a sign that she felt at home and felt pleased. This is what I wanted. I wanted the classroom to feel like home as in Dewey's (1938) sense of the continuum between school and home. It was gratifying to see the fire as a warm welcome. After arranging two long narrow wooden tables together, the presenters settled in, with Elizabeth using logs from the hearth to hold the weight of the Innu flag as a table skirt. Audrey and Kari worked together holding and tacking a Labrador map on the wall. With the chairs and tables scattered and the room generally askew, I felt the urge to organize the space to fit the image of the setting I had envisioned earlier. I hurried to pick up pieces of litter and loose papers left on the floor and on some of the tables. When I pulled at a two-seater couch to bring it in among the chairs, I felt the strain and a tug to the joints in my back and I watched gratefully as two students who had arrived early took over the task, then continued to arrange the room.

Conversations and Teaching Life Outside-the-Classroom

Through Audrey's explanation, I learned that Kari had worked hard to secure funding for the tour. The reader, who may be a teacher or an educator in a more traditional sense, may not relate to Kari's experience of fund raising. For me, Kari's fund raising holds a common narrative thread to my life as a teacher. Her story reminded me of the continual strain of securing federal funding for the community based programs I taught with during my beginning years of teaching. The work I did with the students depended on my colleagues and our success in marketing our programs. This meant moving beyond the walls of the classroom into local radio and television studios, and presenting the details of our programs at community luncheons. We held open houses and arranged regular advertising slots on the local cable television stations and in small-town newspapers. Often times the work we did was exciting, but marketing the programs, was unrelenting.

* * *

I noted Kari's fatigue in the car as she let the headrest take the weight of her head in contrast to the sparks of enthusiasm that entered her voice when she reflected on her initial experiences with Elizabeth in the bush, "Do you remember me on the caribou hunt? I didn't know where to stand, or what to do with myself. I just thought that I would get in the way." As I listened to her words, I thought of my own identity as a teacher who has been teaching in the community college for twenty years, and who is sometimes tired, and with fewer bursts of energy than what I had when I first began to teach. The ebb and flow of Kari's tiredness and enthusiasm reminded me of the personal fatigue that I hear community college teachers talk to one another about. Perhaps I noticed Kari's level of energy in light of the fierce twinges through my lower back from moving tables and chairs around in the log cabin. Kari's expression spoke to the range of visceral responses I experience in the classroom, and in situations on the landscape that continue to provoke uncertainty, excitement, concern, and new learning. Imagining Kari on the hunt, and empathizing with her confusion about where to stand and her doubt about what to do next, resonated with my experiences inside, and outside the classroom. I was reminded that I sometimes, in the metaphorical sense, *dance* with my students.

* * *

Teacher Relationships that Enter Formal and Informal Learning Situations

Nympha had been described to me, both by Audrey and Kari, as "a soft spoken but strong woman." Earlier on, Audrey had described Elizabeth as "a strong woman who fights for her people." Elizabeth and Nympha's relationship, as I interpreted it, resonated with my memories of Brenda and Catharine in the community based education, who became my mentors during an apprenticeship at the inception of my teaching career. The contrasts between the two women were extensive, yet both were effective. Brenda taught me about being honest and real with the students. Catharine taught me about being clear and pragmatic, while at the same time being empathetic, compassionate, gentle and kind. Catharine never raised her voice, always seeming to remain calm and reserved as she skillfully impacted the student's life. Brenda was gregarious and often raised her voice. She used her physical and auditory presence as an effective tool in the classroom. She modeled a range of emotions and teaching styles that seemed to appeal to the rough and tough student group. With Brenda and Catharine, I observed team-teaching and collaboration in an adult academic upgrading program housed in the basement of a church located a twenty-minute walk from a college's main campus. Both women teachers managed to weave their diverse strengths into the classroom situation. Brenda brought a background in probation and parole and front-line social work experience from the Children's Aid Society, and Catharine brought her administrative and community development background to both building and maintaining the off-campus program.

I thought of my past experience in community based education with my friends and colleagues, Christina, Tessa, Laura, Lynn and Susan, as my teaching community. Together, we taught math and English academics, life skills and vocational exploration programs. Our out-of-classroom conversations were about our students, our lives, and ourselves. For eight years during our drive north, Christina and I talked about our approach to the day, and on the way home, we processed the details. We used our shared travel time to design and launch curriculum and programs into the community. We planned open houses, speaking engagements, field trips and program marketing.

Even though Christina, my colleague with whom I worked the longest, and I spoke the same language, we brought together two different worlds. Our lives were quite different. I lived an active single life, in contrast to her life pattern that revolved around her daughter and her then, husband. Seven years older than I, I saw Christina as having extensive teaching experience from which I learned. From Christina I learned the value of speaking publicly about our work and advocating on behalf of our programs. We travelled, though not as extensively as the Innu, throughout the region informing others about the work we did with our students. In the intimacy of each of these previous teacher relationships, despite varying life narratives, there seemed to be a shared vision of how we wanted the larger outside community to embrace our educational programs.

For the first eight years of my teaching career, when I taught in adult education programs that were funded by federal and provincial moneys, it was commonplace to have to fight for the life of the program. Together, with students and their families, colleagues and advisory committee members, we advocated for the sustained life of our programs. This became our life. We learned that we could never rest into the sense of stability that funding for the programs would last forever.

Formal and Informal Teachers: Negotiation of Subject Matter

From the first time I heard about Elizabeth and her fight for her people, I was intrigued and wanted to learn more about her work. Prior to the visit, Audrey invited me to her home to preview the National Film Board video *Hunters and Bombers* (1991), that featured Elizabeth in the role as advocate for her people. I suggested to my colleague that the students watch the film as a preview to the women's visit, but this request was declined. Viewing this film cemented my thinking that my students should have an opportunity to meet Elizabeth and hear her story. I knew her story could teach us about advocacy and community work. I also felt strongly that my students would learn from her personal story about bringing about change and not doing it alone. Elizabeth's fight for her children and grandchildren seemed to parallel with my own experience of the times I have fought for my students, and the times that I have felt alone in bringing about change or fairness to the curriculum.

Planning for the Innu women's visit took several months of e-mail and telephone conversations with Audrey, as flights were confirmed, and Elizabeth's visit expanded to include Nympha as interpreter, and then Kari as supporter. It felt exciting to include my students in this learning. I felt strongly that her story would speak to the work they were preparing to do in the community. In their previous semester, the students completed a community development course. I spoke to one of my colleagues about Elizabeth's tour and the possibility of the students hearing her speak. We lamented the timing of her visit to the province, but agreed the students would still benefit from a speaker presentation on the practical concepts of *community*, *advocacy* and a *grassroots organization* in relation to the theoretical work they did the semester before. My thinking behind the presentation was that my students would connect the social work and community development theory to Elizabeth's story and her fight for justice against the government and the military. I saw Elizabeth's story as an example of one possible *path* for work in advocacy and citizenship, following Connelly and Clandinin's, (1988) notion that the curriculum can become a course of action in the student's and teacher's life. I embraced Elizabeth's life story as curriculum and the path that some of my students might take in their work in the future. The life paths of Elizabeth and the other women visiting my classroom were quite unlike my own. I believed and hoped that the richness of their personal narratives would fill what I saw as a gap in my own curriculum. I also anticipated that from the Innu women's stories of experience I would also gain new insights into community development. In the context of my own bias, our program curriculum does not fully embrace advocacy and community, and in my thinking, Elizabeth's visit was a way for our curriculum to move beyond the boundaries of the theoretical literature and social work textbooks.

A Common Story about Community College Curriculum

As I reconstruct the meaning of the Innu women's visit to my thesis inquiry, I realize with sadness that this visit is typical of a contemporary program curriculum on the shifting community college landscape. The Innu women's visit to the log cabin in the context of the students' curriculum and life experience lacked a narrative background. Unfortunately, I was on leave and was unable to provide the students with the opportunity to see the film that would have introduced Elizabeth and her people's narrative to the students prior to their visit. Had I been at the college and shown the film, it likely would have been after lengthy faculty discussion and debate about the merits of giving up time from other subject material. The week following Elizabeth's visit, the students were scheduled to go into their field placement settings in the community, and it was therefore unlikely that the bridge between the event in the log cabin and the students' experience would be nourished with follow-up discussion. The temporal quality of Elizabeth's visit to the province and to our college was such that it conflicted with my own thesis writing leave, which also shaped the quality of this learning event. In the context of an already shortened semester, and a sense of hurried-ness and panic among students and teachers about getting ready for the Block Placement week, my teaching intentions and expectations of my students and colleagues *had not* shifted in light of realizing many changes on the college landscape.

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Travelling Toward the Campus...

The women in the front seat of the car seemed unaware and untouched by the conversation between Elizabeth and Nympha, who continued to speak softly to one another in their own language. It was also unlikely anyone in the car knew what I was thinking. I kept silent about my feelings about returning to the college and about the distance I was experiencing from the classroom and from my students and colleagues. My leave of absence for this thesis writing had begun, and I felt as though I had let go of something so far as the classroom and the students were concerned. The Innu women's voices were soft, even, and soothing enough that they did not distract me from my inner turmoil. I had wanted to follow the plans for the Innu women's visit (started several months ago) through to its completion. I was remembering the tension I had about keeping my commitment to Audrey or handing it over to another colleague. I wanted everything to go right, yet I was torn about returning. In spite of my intentions, the visit had the flavour of an ad-hoc approach.

* * *

In the Log Cabin...

When the log cabin was almost full I introduced the panel, briefly explaining that we had decided to take a 'tag-team' approach in our introductions. I invited the students to let their minds drift back to their community development course from the semester before. I told them that I had met Audrey at my church and that plans for this session actually began over a coffee break. I recalled Audrey standing alone, and approached to tell her that I had appreciated her standing up during the church service to speak on behalf of the Innu people. Audrey's announcement had even more meaning for me when she later arranged for Kari to visit with my youth group and tell her stories about their concerns and how the Innu people live. During her visit with the church kids, and like she did in the log cabin, Kari brought pictures that further illuminated the stories about several of her visits to the Innu. After only a few moments, it was quite evident that Kari's stories captured the interests of the youth group members who were present that night. I sensed quite deeply that the youth group members realized that Kari had an important message to share. "The Innu," she explained, "live on the land. They don't take any more from the environment than they can use." She passed around the pictures of Elizabeth and her family, while captivating the adolescents' interests with her stories.

* * *

A Personal Story as Subject Matter in the Log Cabin

During her presentation, and beginning in English, Elizabeth stood. She began by saying she is a mother of nine children, a grandmother of 24, and that she is fighting the government and the military for the future of her children and her grandchildren. Elizabeth also talked about herself. She told us that she was born in a tent in the bush. She said that her mother and father, sisters and brothers were very happy living in their tent. She said she never knew her people as singing songs or dancing. She didn't know about alcohol. She repeated that her "family, mother, father, and sisters and her brothers, were very happy." They worked, cleaned, hunted, walked, and lived in the tent. "We were very happy." Elizabeth told the students that she doesn't speak very good English and that if they didn't understand her, they must tell her so that she can help them understand. Her story continued with telling the students that the low-level jets are destroying the culture, and impacting the Innu way of life. Among the singed trees and the polluted rivers as excess fuel is dumped, the caribou and the porcupines are smaller and fewer. Elizabeth described the incredible noise and the frightened, sleepless children who would wake up crying in the night. She talked about the future, and she talked about the past, the health, and the happiness of her people. Elizabeth said that she wants her children and grandchildren to know how their grandparents lived and survived. She spoke quietly, and sadly, about her own adult children using alcohol. She added, "and maybe my grandchildren will use alcohol." She said, "maybe you have heard about the problems in our community on the news."[1] Heads nodded throughout the audience. The room was still, with only the crackle of the fire in the background. Elizabeth's voice was quiet and

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[1] One-year later stories about Elizabeth's community, her words and the faces of her grandchildren were in the national news. She quietly spoke about this at a book launch that I attended. Elizabeth and Nympha read their stories from a recently published text. (Byrne and Fouillard, 2000). As she spoke, I recognized a transformation. She seemed different from her visit to my 1999 January classroom. This time she spoke English, turning only to Nympha once or twice for help in translation. She began her talk to the audience of thirty-five in the small bookstore by telling us that she wanted to speak English. I thought that I heard pride behind her words. She was different in another way too. When she spoke to my students in the log cabin she pushed the tape recorder away as she began to speak. We had spoken about taping her presentation to my students, and she agreed, but when I saw her poke at the tape recorder, pushing it away, I turned it off. Noticing that her fingers continued to poke, I removed the tape recorder and put it in the bag sitting on the floor between us. This time in her visit away from Labrador, she spoke to national media journalists, and her words echoed across national and local news stories. What was also different were the soft tears that streamed down Elizabeth's face when she spoke about her grandchildren.

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even. She stood tall, with only her fingers leaning on the wooden table. Sometimes she freed one of her hands, and extended her arm toward to sky. She captivated the audience. I remember her saying, "that's all I'm going to say for now. If you have questions, you can ask." As she seated herself several students raised their hands to ask questions.

I admired the way in which the panel of women responded to questions asked by a few of the students. With each question, the women on the panel discussed quietly among themselves who should take the question. I noticed the high level of inclusivity in which the women worked. I watched the care each member on the panel took to listen and understand the question. Questions were clarified among the panel members before there was agreement about who would address the student. Earlier Kari had told me that Elizabeth would speak and present in English, because sometimes Nympha gets tired from translating. The two women's voices interchanged throughout the presentation. I was reminded of team teaching with Laura, Gayle and Lynn and the sense I had of a dance of collaboration. The work that we did together with the rough-and-ready student population was not unlike the women's flow of the interchange.

Curriculum as Life Experience in the Kitchen

"*Innu don't rest until they sleep*"

Elizabeth Penuche, (January 21, 1999)

The front seat conversation circled around to the idea that the five of us might have lunch in a restaurant somewhere after the presentation. Reminding me of my conversations with Christina, Audrey wanted to collaboratively reflect on the session. She asked about the school cafeteria, and I advised strongly against it because the food, like the classroom is synthetic and contrary to the teaching world I value. Like the cafeteria, the classroom forbids diverse tastes, creative mixtures, variance, and wholeness. In the end, Audrey served us homemade oxtail soup, a selection of cheeses, and good Russian bread in her home.

After the class we drove to Audrey's home. In Audrey's kitchen, Kari stood by the stove and stirred the soup. Kari told me about her life. She told me that she graduated from a community college, community service program. I wondered if Kari valued her experience over her formal education since she did not mention the later to the students.

In contrast, Nympha did tell the students that she trained and studied in addiction counselling and specialized programs for Natives.

The oxtail soup seemed to provide a further stimulus for my learning about Innu life and about the women. Women talking and cooking together in Audrey's kitchen created a feeling of community. I thought about past times when formal classrooms were modified for potluck lunches consisting of home-cooked dishes and flavours and scents from individual students' and teachers' kitchens.

As Kari retrieved the marrow from the soup bone, she shared where the women could find caribou meat. Nympha and Elizabeth also eat the marrow of the caribou bone. They told us that they cook and eat all of the caribou. They used to eat the liver too, but not since the low flying jets began disposing their fuel on the land. I was reminded again of the differences in our lives. I don't like to think in terms of eating hunted caribou. But at the same time, I felt consoled as I listened to the lunch-time conversation about meat, bones and marrow, and I recalled Kari's words to the church kids: "the Innu take no more from the land than they need."

Nympha told us that she felt uncomfortable carrying her eagle feather back to Labrador in a plastic bag, which left me wondering how the feather arrived in Ontario without incident. She told us that she sought something appropriate to protect her feather. The concern and care of Nympha's eagle feather symbolized the interest in preserving the culture and the educational objectives of the tour. I was hoping the students heard the perseverance, advocacy, and civil protest in response to the threat to the Innu culture that I heard embedded in her story. I was caught by my own satisfaction of listening to the stories of the women in the relaxed atmosphere of Audrey's bright kitchen overlooking her garden. The kitchen conversation felt good and in contrast to the current community college landscape, reminiscent of the times when classrooms often felt like communal places, and teachers and office staff ate lunch together in shared space.

The tradition of community college teachers eating and sharing over our lunches has since been interrupted with complex time-tabling schedules. Dialogue with colleagues has since shifted more to resemble sound bites and hurried communication. Conversations with students once held in offices have also been interrupted, but manage to continue between classes in hallways, shared office space, stairwells, and in washrooms. Classroom conversations have been shortened and now feel abrupt. I thought back to my earlier teaching years in the Helping Profession program during the late 1980's and the early 1990's and the classes of fourteen or fifteen students in a small seminar room that doubled as a faculty meeting room. The seminar permitted thoughtful discussion and an emphasis on what Dewey (1938) values as the "raw material" providing the student and teacher the means of determining what can be learned from the students' individual and collective experiences in their field placements. I have fond memories of classroom sessions that took on the ambiance of students working together in a workshop atmosphere. The fragmented conversations in my current-day classrooms have frequently left me with a sense of uncertainty about what is left undone. In light of the students' busy and complex lives, I can only anticipate the next opportunity for conversation; I feel frustration about reconnecting with them.

As we ate lunch in Audrey's kitchen, Elizabeth was pulled away from the conversation by a number of phone calls about confirming speaking engagements, meal times and travel arrangements. The interruptions and the multitasking resembled the complexity of both the students' and teacher's world. At first glance, Elizabeth seemed to take her world in stride. She reentered the conversation with ease each time she returned from the telephone in Audrey's home office. My initial image of her life and its simplicity of living in a tent (though in my mind this is a challenging life) shifted as I learned more about the details of her existence. As her story unfolded, I learned that her life is far more complex than I first imagined. Knowing that Kari was going to rest, I asked Elizabeth if she were going to rest before speaking to the student federation at the University of Toronto later in the evening, to which she replied, "*Innu don't rest until they sleep*."

Interim Summary

So far, I have guided my reader through conversation, among formal and informal teachers during a car ride, back and forth between a formal classroom situation and informal dialogue in a working kitchen. After contemplating the Innu women's visit to my classroom, I asked myself the following question: In what way is Elizabeth's work, as an educator in a non-formal context, similar to the work I do in a community college classroom on an institutional landscape? In the duration of my community college teaching experience there have been sleepless nights when I have not rested about my curriculum. From the stories Elizabeth told in Audrey's kitchen, my classroom and in the documentary film, *Hunters and Bombers* (1991), I learned about the life challenges that pulled Elizabeth to her community work and the obstacles she faces. ~~Elizabeth has chosen to address the challenges facing the Innu community in a number of ways.~~ Elizabeth's story of the Innu is told across Canada in churches, social agencies, government offices, ~~and~~ schools and universities. ~~She is invited to tell her story of the Innu people's challenges.~~ Similar to community college teachers, Elizabeth is an educator who lives on a shifting social landscape in a changing world. The fragments of change – military practice-flights over Innu land –shape traditional cultural practices and the life narratives of Elizabeth's relationships with her children and grandchildren shape her identity as an advocate and evolving identity (advocate, civil protester and demonstrator and educator) is also shaped by the changing social world. Through the lens of Elizabeth's one-time visit to my classroom, and since writing about the Innu women's visit, and thinking in terms of changes to social and institutional landscapes, I reconstructed, what I first considered, the similarities in the distinctions between formal, informal and non-formal educational situations. From my reconstructed stories, I learned that among the challenges and obstacles faced in the two separate worlds of adult learning, landscape changes, over time, shaped the teaching life and professional identity of both Elizabeth and myself.

A Community College Teacher's Unrest on a Previous Landscape

~~and the~~ The story of conflict and tension that I am about to tell feels complex and multilayered with secret and cover stories and plot lines of identity, judgment, milieu and power threaded throughout. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) assert, "In narrative thinking, an action is seen as a *narrative sign*" (p. 31) [italics added]. To further explore these *narrative signs*, my focus moves back in time to 1993.

In 1993, when I was the coordinator for the Helping Profession program, and in conversation with many of the students, I consistently heard stories that made me feel ashamed and doubtful about the course curriculum. From the students I heard a number of complaints about how faculty handled attendance, assignments, discipline and workload. The students claimed that they wanted to be treated as "adults" and not penalized for failing to attend class when personal life situations took precedent. At the same time, as a faculty group, I felt that we had shifted from our original collaborative approach to the curriculum and how we engaged with our students as learners. We had become argumentative, hostile, and then generally non-communicative with one another.

As one way to dislodge my own dissatisfaction I decided to return to school, and enrolled in a Bachelor of Education in Adult Education program. Upon completion of this program, I entered a Masters of Education, and then continued on to pursue my doctorate degree and this thesis work. I recall the day I applied for entry into the masters program. I was at a mandatory faculty meeting for the purpose of creating a "local strategic plan" for our department, an agenda that we had adopted in a futile attempt at fixing our tensions. The facilitator, who worked with an outside consultant, was specifically trained in strategic planning, and worked closely with the college president and college strategic plan committee. The women faculty and the department administrator, who was male, attended the meeting. The three men on faculty did not attend. One said the meeting was not a part of his workload and the other two forwarded their regrets through the voice mail system.

Our group agreed to work through the first phase of a three-level process for the duration of the morning. Over the course of the first hour, one of my colleagues asked why I felt ashamed of the curriculum. I welcomed the opportunity to address my concerns, but began to feel some discomfort with her question. I felt like there was a planned and collective attack directed at me through the voice of one of my colleagues. As this situation persisted, and since it was apparent to me that the facilitator fumbled with the discussion as more and more words spilled from her lips, the group expressed a need to take a break. We agreed to reconvene in fifteen minutes. Feeling quite shaken, holding back tears, I went directly to my office and closed the door. I sat quietly for a few minutes reflecting on what had just happened, what I was feeling, and where to go next. On my desk was the application form for the Master's program. Without much more thought, I gathered my bag and coat, took the application, and walked straight out the door of the campus to the subway. I sat in the subway car, heading toward the university and when I arrived I submitted my application. I recall feeling the strength of my actions, and the sense I had to just keep moving forward.

One year later, on returning from my sabbatical and the completion of my Master's program, I visited the office of the vice-president of human resources to ask him about 'other opportunities' at the college and where I might fit in. As the VP explained that "nothing was really happening," I absorbed the atmosphere of his office. I sat down first in the armchair, and he came from around his large oak desk to join me. He sat on the plush two-seater couch with his knees spread apart, with one foot on the sofa and other on the coffee table. I noticed his computer monitor on the credenza behind his desk. The baseball scores were streaming across the bottom of the large computer screen. I took in the college documents lying on the table with their gold embossed covers. After seeming to ponder my request, I heard him say, "Why don't you and your husband go to Australia on an exchange?" I interpreted this to mean I could go away, and there was no place for me at the college if I wanted change. At the end of this meeting he suggested I talk to another of the vice-presidents.

The week following, when I met with the vice-president and told him that I was seeking a new challenge at the college, he asked why should the good person leave? I could feel my cheeks flush. I said to him, "It's not about any one of us as good or not, but I admit, my work style doesn't fit the culture of the program." He said who would you say is the problem? Answering him, "Again, I don't see anyone as the problem. I have worked in the department for almost ten years, and with the same people. I believe that I am ready for something different." I told him, observing his interest, that I had been looking for a while and that I had applied and declined a second-level interview for an administrative position. I left his office feeling melancholy. On the one hand I felt acknowledged and heard. On the other, I felt uncomfortable about our conversation. He asked me not to tell anyone that we had this conversation. With cheeks that were again flushed, I meekly nodded in agreement. I did not like how diminished I felt and my own seeming acceptance of the VP's silencing and dismissal.

I initiated a second meeting with the VP by submitting a proposal for a new program for review. He asked me if this proposal was still in pursuit of a change for myself and I told him it was. He asked, "Do you think with the near closing and then the move of the program, that your colleagues..." and then as if to catch himself, said, "I didn't mean to imply there is any connection..."

Within weeks of our meeting, I heard that the program was closing. In my journal I wrote:

> *I feel angry with my colleagues, with the department chair, and with the senior administrators for the way this program has been left to grind itself into the ground. I feel as though something inside me has died.*
>
> *The vice-president was firm and clear in the first meeting this morning. He didn't mince words. As I sat in our staff meeting watching him address my colleagues I pondered the earlier meeting I had with him and his request for my silence. The vice-president explained that we were axed because the college wants to get out of the business of "human services," leaving it to the other colleges.*
>
> *One of my women colleagues responded that she was still suffering from what happened last semester with the men on faculty hiding behind the collective agreement and the women doing all the work. Her comment startled me. I had been feeling so alone in my struggle. (Journal Entry, September 1998).*

* * *

When I drive through the rural campus gates, I find myself slowing down to take in the campus' country landscape. I notice three white swans among the collection of colorful ducks floating gracefully over the pond. Each time, as I pass by the pond I think about the workings of nature, and the fateful image of the hawk carrying off one gosling early in the spring. I wonder about the goslings that were spared as I look over the pond, and see that all of the swans are now full grown. To my right as I drive through the winding road are an ever-growing flock of Canadian geese lining the hills of the campus. I ponder their fate after their next flight south.

At the beginning of a new semester in my journal I wrote:

Journal: September 2, 1998

In the past two days there were tears. My colleague, having just come back from her sabbatical, came to tears over her lost boxes that went missing in the move. In one of these boxes was a note on a piece of paper that her mother had written to her the year that she died. My colleague tucked the note in her multicultural binder, as she planned to share its contents with her students.

With the near closing of the program, and the three moves, two temporary and one permanent, faculty and students were disgruntled. I sensed my colleague's fatigue about returning to the college after her year-long sabbatical.

* * *

Following the Innu women's presentation in the log cabin, and sitting again in the car, I thought of Kari's tiredness as I tried to forget about my own felt physical discomfort. The pain in my back, resulting from my rushed exertion to shift chairs and tables in the log cabin, perhaps embodies the semblance of confusion ingrained in the following questions: Was the Innu visit just another random event in the students' education? Had the visit become a random curricular activity forgotten and lost among my leave of absence, the snowstorm, and the students in their placements the following week? What meaning could the Innu women's visit have in the context of the daily-ness of the students' lives on the landscape of a rural and prestigious community college campus? As the community college landscape shifts, and expectations of students and teachers change, and as the geese prepare for their journey south in this changing world, I know indeed that it really does matter to include teachers and students in the curriculum of the caring professions.

Adrift From the Theoretical World of Adult Education: Theory Vs Reality

In this chapter, I have reconstructed the experience of preparing for, and then spending several hours with Audrey, Kari and the two Innu women, Elizabeth and Nympha. I have reflected on what I learned about the Innu women's lives. The level of comfort that I experienced during our brief encounter resonated with previous teaching experiences on the college landscape.

I have also taken the reader back and forth in time between programs and across institutional borders. In writing this chapter, I both resisted and embraced my thesis supervisor's questions to me about what aspects of my story of the Innu women's visit should be included in my thesis. He asked, "What is the use of this car ride up the highway? Why is the story there?"

> *As we continued north on the highway, Kari noted that the car windows were fogging up and that it was becoming difficult to see. Audrey assured us that her mechanic found the defrost to be in good working order. From their seats in the front, Kari and Audrey desperately cleaned the windows using the Kleenex on the front dash. As we continued to move forward, now in the passing lane of the expressway, I believe it was only Audrey and myself who noticed the OPP (Ontario Provincial Police) cruiser slow beside us. He seemed to investigate our situation. He must have felt quite satisfied, however, because he quickly drove off and disappeared from our view. All the while Elizabeth and Nympha maintained the focus of their conversation.*

Michael Connelly responded to the story I wrote about driving with the Innu women to the campus, and said that among the foggy windows and not being able to see, that he was expectant of an *impending collision*. In spite of the sense of chaos in the front seat of the car, I did not experience any sense of danger during the car ride with Audrey at the wheel, though Michael Connelly's words, "impending collision" captivated my attention.

A Teacher Identity Unravels

My thesis proposal committee meeting focused on questions of identity. To my surprise, deliberated in the meeting were the questions, who is an adult educator? Are teachers who teach in the formal institutional environment adult educators or does this title only pertain to learning situations outside formal learning institutions? One member on my committee objected to my interchangeable use of the terms 'learner' and 'student.' These questions, in the context of my own narrative history, challenged my professional identity on the community college landscape. Early in the duration of the thesis proposal meeting, one committee member asked in an apparent tone of frustration, "are we talking about students or learners? You are using the terms student and learners interchangeably, and quite frankly, they are not the same." I explained that I had *intentionally* used the terms interchangeably because the interchange of these terms actually reflected my teaching and classroom experiences. I had struggled with this choice, not only in my own thesis work, but also with my colleagues in the community college arena. With my colleagues, debates about learner/student often evolved out of staff meeting discussions around student attendance, assignment due dates, and teacher-student conflict.

In my thinking about the classroom and the curriculum I am an individual whose whole twenty-year working career has been in education, teaching and learning with students who are mostly adults, in the context of the community college system. In the past several years I unwittingly began to struggle with what to call myself. Should I call myself a teacher, or am I called an adult educator? As an educator in a helping profession worker program, liberal studies and earlier, an adult academic education program most of my teaching experiences are in the context of the formal educational institution.

Impending Collisions and Clashing Worlds in Adult Education

I have since reflected and reconstructed the meaning of my thesis proposal committee meeting, and I have come to understand that during the interchange with my committee members, I was caught in a tension between the different worlds within adult education. I referred to the contrast between formal and informal adult education in chapter one. The narrative history that I bring to this thesis inquiry into the evolving identities of teachers on the community college landscape captures the collisions and the messiness between and beyond the categories of adult education discussed during our meeting. For some educators, the formal institutional structure of the community college is not thought about in terms of adult education. However, in the earlier narrative of the Helping Profession program, the curriculum embraced a course named *Principles of Adult Learning* (PAL), designed after one of the grand theoretical narratives in adult education. When I crossed the educational landscape boundary, from the community based programs into the post-secondary Helping Profession program, these and other principles in adult education programming gained even greater significance to my teacher thinking and classroom practice. My story of community college teaching embraced adult learning theoretical perspectives. My notion of good teaching was embedded in my adoption of these sacred adult education theoretical perspectives into my practice. My professional practical knowledge was patterned on these sacred theory-practice stories and these were the stories I came to live by in my classroom. Adult learning principles became my teaching story-to-live-by.

Putting a Grand Narrative into Practice

Teaching the course called Principles of Adult Education (PAL), ultimately named after Brundage and Mackeracher's theoretical notions, in the Helping Profession program invoked in me the reconstruction of my own late high school and early university experiences. Teaching and co-developing this course provided me with a bridge to what I considered the pragmatics of working with students who were in a learning situation that was new to them. Teaching this course was also a personal journey that embraced my past professional practical knowledge and the students' futures. It allowed me to recapture my earlier experience of working closely with students to help them plan their futures. At this time, I believed in the application of Brundage and Mackeracher's adult learning principles to my classroom and continued, following my former colleague's example, to provide the students with these principles because I believed they also mirrored standards relevant to social work practice.

This curriculum became one of my favourite courses to teach the first semester students. The course curriculum provided the students with a milieu that supported successful learning. It was in this subject where I most clearly saw the learner I was in my youth. I heard my parents not understanding the pressures and expectations of young adults in the learning environment and how it was really different from what happens in early high school. Memories resonated during my preparation and teaching of this course. Memories such as how typing late at night was not tolerated because it kept my father awake. I remembered how my household chore responsibilities often took precedent over reading and completing my assignments. I wrestled with my parents about my workload but somehow didn't convince them. They said I had time for other things like going out with friends and talking on the phone. In the *Principles of Adult Learning* course I found that I was able to encourage my own students to take the time to educate their family members about the program and about the expectations of the curriculum.

As a result of teaching this subject, I acquired a strong liking for the work of Malcolm Knowles (1975). Knowles' theory of self-directed learning and the use of the learning contract have played a key role in my approach to working with adult learners. I began working with Knowles' theories in 1988, revising this material to assist learners to understand the continuum between teacher-directed and self-directed learning. I pictured myself as a younger learner on this continuum. Feeling under-prepared and lost during my first year of university, where teachers were seemingly locked away in dark corridors and behind tightly closed doors, was in contrast to having teachers who had mostly been available to me in directing my learning path. With clear intentions of not wanting to teach this way, and following Knowles, I introduced the students to collaborative learning, and the utilization and sharing of self and others as a resource. I felt that if I managed to introduce the learners to the skills necessary to be self-directed learners, then the learning environment would take on the feel of an active and productive community. I was hoping to avoid the sense of isolation that I experienced in my own education. It is within this teacher thinking that the *rhythm*, *patterns* and *unity* of my experience of becoming a teacher are most evident.

The tone of tension in my thesis proposal meeting has also presented itself among student groups and in staff meetings among my colleagues throughout my teaching career, though the tension of the tone seems to have intensified and become more frequent in the past few years. My colleagues and I have reminisced and lamented about the "kinds" of students we used to teach. In faculty meetings, discussion wound its way back to the familiar and unrelenting question, " How are we approaching the individuals in our program? As adults or non-adults?" I recall one colleague's firm response: "They are not adults." Reminding my colleague that some of our students are twenty, twenty-one to twenty-four years of age, I probed the possibility that the learners in our programs are at least "young adults?" and heard with certainty, "No. Our students are *not* adults" (Teaching Journal, January 1995).

* * *

Learners or Students?

Following student feedback in a subject evaluation, and after learning that most of the students said that they did not like the Knowles (1975) text we used for the Principals of Adult Learning course in 1989, Cynthia and I consulted a number of publishers about a more appropriate text. Based on the comments our students gave us, we chose a text for the following semester that we believed would speak to our incoming students' language level and learning needs. The text we chose used illustrations and language that seemed respectful of the student's experience. The author of the text used the term adult learner and invited the reader into the text with questions and exercises. The cost of the text was also a consideration.

In the semester that immediately followed, there was a shift in the general characteristics among the students, and at the mid-term evaluation some of the students in my class complained about the new textbook. I had asked the students to review their own learning journey in the class and invited their comments about where we should go next. During our discussion I realized that the textbook that my colleague Cynthia and I had chosen had fallen out of favour with a number of the students. A couple of students said that the text was "too complicated" and that it "offered too many options." Another student announced to the class that she felt the text had "nothing to do with them." When I inquired about what she meant by this, she said, "This book is for adult learners!" Agreeing with her, I asked how she saw that as a problem, to which she responded, "but we *aren't* adult learners!" I recall asking, what do you call yourselves? The student's announcement in the 1989 classroom became a source of debate in this class, and continues throughout my teaching experience. At first, my memory of this incident resonated with the suggestion that I should not use the terms *student* and *adult learner* interchangeably.

In my committee meeting, and as I approached my thesis inquiry, I continued to feel unsettled with the certainty of my colleagues' statements, and our role as educators in the relationship with the adult status of the students in our classrooms. At the same time, I have felt bewildered by the approach some students take to their learning and their peers. However, to categorize the students' behaviours or life stages, felt uncomfortable. Given the temporal and rhythm-like qualities and the waves of change on the shifting community college landscape in the changing world, I anticipate revisiting the clarification of these terms in future research.

Tensions and Collisions

In my thesis proposal committee meeting there was a feeling of an impending collision. I experienced this in two ways. First, as I have already mentioned, we were unable to come to an agreement about using the terms *teacher, learner, student* and *adult educator* in the community college classroom. As well, among some of the themes in the adult education literature there is the notion that adult learners are motivated to be self-directed in their own course of learning. This notion is counter to my actual experience in the classroom with students. There are learners, who say themselves that they are not motivated. These individuals are not being talked about in the literature. The tension I experienced in the thesis committee meeting is throughout much of the adult education literature, including the questions, what is adult learning? Where in the social community does adult learning take place? Who is an adult learner? When in a person's lifetime are they called an adult learner and not a student? These questions are addressed in chapter three.

* * *

Returning to travelling in the car on the highway, and thinking about my conversation with Michael Connelly, I tried to capture the sense of melancholy I felt in the back seat of Audrey's station wagon. I was pleased *not* to be driving and content that I was catching fragments of the conversations in the car. I had allowed myself to embrace the pleasure of a leave of absence, though unpaid, to pursue my thesis inquiry. I hadn't wanted to return to the tension, and to the travelling back and forth between two worlds of adult education, from teacher on the community college landscape, to student and researcher in the context of higher education.

While I felt relief when my immediate work supervisor agreed to the leave, I also experienced a level of anxiety that I didn't yet understand about entering into this inquiry. As a way to cope with yet another departure, I approached the following question: What sense of the classroom do I think I'm leaving? I wondered if I was experiencing sadness about leaving a sense of the classroom as I *imagined* it to be. I wondered if I was possibly mourning the community college classroom experience of the 1980's. I considered that perhaps I was leaving a sense of hope of trying to return to teaching as I first knew and adored it. I had the sense I was feeling badly about leaving the classroom situation and teaching as I experienced it in the past, and as I *wanted* it to be now, and in the future. What came to mind was a line of personal feedback that I have heard from family members and other people, who care about me, "you have trouble letting go." My thinking and these questions intermingled with my awareness of the ride up the highway, listening to the strategies and reflections of the Innu women, Audrey and Kari in the car, how things went in Sudbury, and how they would approach the college and university students later in the evening.

While sitting snugly in the back seat of Audrey's station wagon, I felt adrift, as if I were entering back into a sense of ambivalence. I didn't want to be confronted with my own feelings of push/pull, unresolved conflicts, and discontented students. I had already launched into, and grown accustomed to, higher education. As a student in higher education, I experience a way of being in a formal learning institution in a way that reflects my beginning years in teaching, and how I *want,* and *imagine* the learning experience to *be* in my own community college classroom. Was my professor's sense of an impending collision and the station wagon chaos a semblance to my own dissonance about myself as a teacher in the community college classroom?

* * *

Returning again to Elizabeth's life narrative and her story of experience in informal education, she spoke about her comfort of living in the bush. Elizabeth once experienced a sense of belonging similar to my previous feelings about teaching on the community college landscape and where I once experienced amenity. Elizabeth experienced living in the bush as a pleasing experience. As we each continue to move forward, in the murkiness of change, throughout our individual landscapes in a changing world, these past experiences seem to no longer apply.

In an attempt to recreate these experiences, in my fourteenth year of teaching I had entered into Brock University's Bachelor of Education in Adult Education program. As a way preserve her Innu culture, Elizabeth also chose to embark on a new journey leaving Labrador and travelling throughout Canada. In the Brock University program I sought collegiality, like-minded people, and conversations with other teachers about the changing students on the shifting landscape of the community college. I wanted to talk about curriculum and students in the context of a shifting focus to innovative computer technology and international education. During her travels, Elizabeth told her story in hope that others would come to know about the Innu.

* * *

I have spoken of my supervisor's interest in the description of the car ride that intrigued me. I considered what might be creating the sense that it could all go wrong? What is creating that sense of an impending collision? I thought perhaps that I had unknowingly written something with the underpinnings of my own angst about coming to realize I was teaching on a changing community college landscape that was outside the theoretical world of the adult education literature. I considered my actual experience with the curriculum, students and teachers on the community college landscape, and the apparent gap between practice and theory. I thought about my uncertainty and the caution I often use in calling myself a teacher or an adult educator, always considering where I am, and who I am in communication with. From our discussion about the pending collision on the highway, I was reminded of that the tensions within my thesis proposal committee meeting also mirrored the turmoil of the community college landscape.

Colleagues, Collisions and Contrasts

At the onset of my planning for the Innu women's visit, one of my colleagues had pushed to have the presentation in the usual classroom. During a telephone conversation, it was suggested that some of the students may have trouble finding the cabin and that this would increase the chances of them arriving to the session late. I anticipated an intimate connection between the life stories of the women on the panel and the young women in the student audience. I had a sense of knowing the students who attended the Innu women's visit because I worked with most of the students in the context of a first-semester course that introduced social issues. I had read most of their narrative papers. Revealed were student stories of alcohol abuse, family violence, and personal experiences in discrimination. The narrative papers helped me understand the life experiences of the students who enter the caring profession. My understanding from the papers helped me know the students and how the experience they bring to the classroom relates to the curriculum.

When my colleagues arrived they took the beginning minutes of the class in the log cabin to give out course outlines and a revised assignment. With time feeling so precious, I felt myself feeling annoyed, even though I understood their rationale. The first class of the semester had been canceled due to a heavy snowstorm, and for many of the students it was their first time back after a long winter break. The women on the panel watched and waited for the room to settle. I silently marveled at their patience in contrast to my own reaction of impatience and embarrassment for what I perceived as inappropriate timing. I thought of the women's far distance from Labrador, and how long they have had to wait to tell their story. I thought of the intricate details of their story and felt concern about the tardiness in our starting time. As papers passed back and forth through the hands of over seventy students, a faculty member discussed changes to one assignment. Among this mild chaos, the profound differences among my colleagues and myself came to mind. I was reminded of the wedge in our relationship and the conflicting approaches to our individual and sometimes contrasting work with students and the curriculum.

* * *

During the car ride, I found myself feeling pleased with Audrey's decision, that it was Kari who should introduce the Innu women to the class. The rich rapport and respect, and the excitement they shared was clear. Nympha and Elizabeth maintained their quiet conversation for the duration of the drive north. In light of their passion to fight for and protect the Innu way of life, I was surprised to learn that Elizabeth and Nympha spoke different dialects. I imagined the complexity of worlds between Nympha and Elizabeth. Perhaps in their conversation they came to know one another in the same way my colleague Christina and I did during the eight years we drove this same highway to our off-campus site.

In the log cabin on the college campus, Kari introduced Elizabeth and Nympha. She explained the nature of their tour and the reason Nympha is travelling with Elizabeth. Elizabeth had asked Kari to arrange a speaking tour, because she wanted to "talk to the womens." From previous visits Elizabeth had sensed a tremendous reservoir of goodwill among ordinary Canadians toward the Innu's struggle for their homeland. She also sensed a profound gap in their knowledge of it. Hence the tour. For Elizabeth, the wrench in leaving her immediate family and her grandchildren was tremendous, but she believed the only way to protect them was to leave them for this two-week mission. Nympha, much younger, is travelling with Elizabeth as interpreter. Kari told the student audience that Nympha had taken a week off work without pay to translate for Elizabeth, so that she too can "*fight for her people.*" Nympha also told her own story.

It is the "fight for her people" that I wanted the students to hear about. I was hoping that along with the connections to the community development course from the earlier semester, the students would draw on their field placement experiences and their anticipated future and professional work in the community with clients and colleagues.

* * *

Chapter Summary

My thesis is a landscape study and an inquiry into teacher identity, adult education and classroom life in the formal community college learning institution. Chapter two is primarily written through the lens of the Innu women's visit – four informal educators, who tell stories about advocacy and their Innu way of life to students and their teachers on the terrain of a formal educational institution. By way of using *experience* and *story* in narrative inquiry, the stories in my thesis are reconstructed and thought about in terms of temporal experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). These stories of experience, written about and reconstructed for narrative meaning, also raise questions about the continuity of curriculum in community college programs *and* the idea of community and relationship among students and teaching colleagues on a post-secondary educational landscape.

Chapter two progresses temporally back and forth and through my experiences in community based education, a 1994 post-secondary classroom situation, and a 1999 car ride and January classroom visit. Drawing on field notes and journals, I capture my reflection during a one-hour car ride to a community college campus. In my journal, I re-tell and reconstruct my conversations with four women educators who work and volunteer in community development and informal education.

Bearing in mind the relevance of the car ride story to my thesis inquiry, I reconstructed the story's meaning several times. I considered the patterns within my own teaching narrative. First, the experience of the car ride with Elizabeth, Audrey, Nympha and Kari was personally meaningful because I was reminded of the in-depth conversations with my colleague Christina. As we travelled together, for eight years, on the highway toward the log cabin, Christina and I spoke about our students and our community based practice. There were times during these earlier conversations when Christina and I mentored one another's teaching practice. Almost eleven years later, the same roadway and shared teacher conversations brings meaning to my teaching life. The narrative pattern is extended to also bring meaning to my life as a narrative researcher. The car conversation in 1999, with Elizabeth, Audrey, Kari and Nympha resonated with the collaboration and the sense of community that I used to feel with my colleagues and students at the community college. Subsequent to further reconstruction, with foggy windows and obstructed vision, an impending collision within the story of the car ride on the highway and the sense that all could go wrong, seems feasible. Through this reconstruction, the car ride story, considered metaphorically, conveys the notion of an impending collision within the different theoretical worlds of adult education in a community college teacher's experience on a shifting landscape.

The Innu women's visit to my 1999 classroom has been highlighted for a number of reasons. Alongside expanding my narrative description of the community college, I also show my teacher thinking, planning and intentions for Elizabeth's classroom-visit as a pathway to link the students' earlier theoretical-introduction to community development subject matter, and the Innu women's actual story of experience. My decision to include

Elizabeth's story as part of the community college curriculum is a *narrative feature* of my personal teaching story. However, like myself, many community college teachers invite individuals who work outside the community college terrain (and sometimes teach informally), into their classrooms to further inform subject matter. I take this unity of action among community college teachers, as a *narrative sign* (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) to think about how curriculum is *deliberated* on the community college landscape. (I discuss curriculum deliberation more extensively in chapter four).

Earlier in my thesis, I have indicated that I approach community college teaching, embracing Schwab's (1964) four curriculum common places: teacher, learner, subject matter and milieu. In planning for the 1999 classroom visit, I primarily focused on connections between the Innu women's story of experience and the students' theoretical exposure, the semester before, to community development subject matter. Attending to the *milieu* curriculum common place I sought space at the community college that might enhance the comfort level of our visitors, and, I also hoped to add an element of intrigue for the students. At this point, I have no clear indication that the students valued being in the log cabin over the classroom. However, immediately following the event in the log cabin, I initiated an on-line, informal follow-up discussion to Elizabeth's talk. One student responded. Perhaps students did not respond because my invitation was not formally attached to tasks indicated in their course outlines. The relevance of Elizabeth and Nympha's story, and its relationship to the students' future occupation in social service and community-work, lay dormant, perhaps suggesting that the life narratives of the Innu were too far outside the students' life experience. My actions and the students' lack of response, as a narrative sign, prompt further inquiry into the question, *to who does the curriculum belong?*

While teaching in the post-secondary Helping Profession program, I came to fall-in-love-with the curriculum, and I found that in 1988, I could draw on my experience and teacher knowledge from my earlier teaching life. Discovering the dog-eared text, *Principles of Adult Learning* (Brundage and Mackeracher, 1980), felt fortuitous. In this literature, I saw remnants of my experiences with Brenda, Catharine, Christina and Susan – all women educators in community based education who sought to embrace students as adults and who worked toward autonomous teacher/student relationships. Through my reconstruction, I found that in my beginning teaching experiences I resided in communal relationships and classroom relationships aimed at community. These initial experiences are integral to my teacher-self and pivotal to my teacher identity.

So far in my thesis, I have made a number of references to some of the specific grand theoretical narratives in adult education literature that have shaped my teaching life and my community college teacher identity. I have spoken of border and boundary crossings between formal, informal and non-formal adult education in terms of my own teaching life. I have told stories about the tensions embedded in my interchangeable use of the terms *learner*, *student*, *educator* and *teacher*, and how I embrace *curriculum* – a term not typically included in adult education discourse – into my work with students in the community college classroom. I have also pointed to collisions, tensions and stories of conflict evolving from moving between shaping stories of teaching experience in community based education and the formal post-secondary classroom.

In chapter three that follows next, I review the adult education literature as it relates to my study. I outline my approach to the literature and I write about my experience of reviewing that literature. Definitions, terms and categorical distinctions within adult education literature permeate my review. I approach questions about the learner and who decides if the learner is an adult. Highlighted, in the discussion about philosophical foundations, are myths and the evolving image embedded in the historical account of adult education.

Further in my thesis, I present stories about changing students on the shifting community college landscape, and I put forth my notion of feeling adrift and ungrounded from a grand narrative in adult education theory – the literature that I so readily embraced at the beginning of my teacher journey.

Chapter Three

In the Literature: Looking for Terra Firma

To find out what the adult education literature says about teacher identity, relationships with students and the curriculum, and to put some parameters on it for my own search, I went to three education encyclopedias (Tuijnman, 1996; Titmus, 1989; and Alkin, 1992). I began with the encyclopedia as my primary resource because it is revered as a book that contains "all the knowledge that an educated man [sic] should have" (Adler, 1972, p. 182). I also turned to the edited text, *Selected Writings on Philosophy and Adult Education* (1984, Merriam) and various other adult education texts. Moving from the more global discussion about adult education, I shifted my focus to adult education in Canada, and turned to *The Foundations of Adult Education in Canada* (Selman and Dampier, 1991). I then moved to a more local perspective and drew on adult education texts that have informed my own teaching practice (Knowles, 1975; Brundage and Mackeracher, 1980; Cranton, 1992, 1989; Brookfield, 1990).

I begin this discussion first by providing the reader with an overview of the challenges and difficulties that I encountered in coming to terms with my experience of reviewing the adult education literature. I delve into the historical background and the temporal distinctions of the field, as they seem to shed light on the present-day tensions in adult education. I am particularly interested in tensions as lived on the community college landscape, both inside and outside the classroom, and its relationship to teacher identity. Deliberation of the overall purposes and functions of adult education from alternate viewpoints is followed by discussion about accepted definitions of adult education. Throughout this review I pose questions about the relationship between adult education as a field and a movement and the position of community colleges within that field and movement.

An Overview of the Challenges

Authors invited to write in encyclopedias succinctly address the question *what is adult education?* The intricate assemblage of terms, categories, events, assumptions, and meanings in adult education makes addressing this question an arduous task. It is here, with the complexity of the various problems confronting adult education, where my inclusion and discussion of this literature begins. At times, I felt overwhelmed as I waded through the encyclopedias and texts seeking clarification and a glimmering recognition of my own teaching experience of almost twenty years in the Ontario community college system. At times, I felt alienated by the literature, especially when typologies seemed to be devoid of any direct discussion of the community college experience. My thesis topic, which is a narrative inquiry into how teacher identity shapes, and is shaped by the shifting community college landscape, begins with an interplay of questions. My first question is: *What is adult education?*

Defining Adult Education is Complex

The term *adult education* appears to have been first used in the United Kingdom. The term did not enter common usage until the second half of the 19th century when it is used to mean a "peculiar, coherent body of knowledge and practice that certainly belongs to the 20th century" (Titmus, 1996, p. 9). The *problem* of defining adult is delineated through much of the literature in adult education encyclopedias and foundation texts. Among many of the theorists there is a general consensus that adult education literature *is* complex and chaotic. Titmus notes the slow pace in which a literal translation of the term entered general use, "if" he wonders, "it did so at all" (1996, p. 9). Darkenwald (1992) concludes, "Adult education is a field of study and educational practice whose scope and significance are poorly understood" (p.30). In terms of an educational practice, Mackerarcher and Tuijnman (1996) acknowledge the complex and dynamic interaction among a broad range of multidisciplinary bodies of knowledge and the implications for individuals involved in adult learning. When attempting to provide some perspective for current practice in Canada, Thomas (1988) speaks to the complexity, breadth, and vitality that characterizes adult education, thereby conceding to the confusion that arises with the question, *what is adult education?*

Terms and Distinctions

Thomas declares, "Depending on who is asked, the response is likely to include a torrent of terms, mostly familiar words in unaccustomed combinations; adult education, continuing education, recurrent education, education permanent, life-long education, vocational/technical training" (1988, p. 23). Many adult education theorists agree that terminology is an area of difficulty central to the general confusion and disarray in the theoretical literature. Where lines are drawn between terms, distinctions are made between training, in-service, continuing education, recurrent education, and life learning. Observing the difficulties with terminology, Darkenwald notes that "Educational activities for adults are seldom called or even recognized as being adult, recurrent education, development, and life-long learning, to name a few" (1992, p. 30).

The categorical nature of the literature, combined with the already complex array of terminology, creates a challenge defining adult education. Throughout the literature, adult education is also discussed in terms of a *phenomenon* (Titmus, 1976; Rubenson, 1996), a *practice* (Rubenson, 1996), a *philosophy* (Merriam, 1984), a *discipline* (Cranton, 1992), an enterprise (Selman and Dampier, 1991), a set of activities (Cranton, 1992) and a *field* (Selman and Dampier, 1991). For some, adult education is embraced as a *profession* (Apps, 1988). For others, adult education is understood in terms of a *movement* (Selman and Dampier, 1991). Adult education is also thought about as a *place*—that is, as an institution or an environment. For some theorists adult education is seen as an *administrative activity* (Selman and Dampier, 1991). Cranton's (1992) point adds to the complexity when she suggests there is the notion among some theorists that, "... almost anything anyone does as part of life can be described as a learning experience and therefore, in some sense, as adult education" (p. 2). In this sense, Cranton makes reference to the overwhelming acceptance of Tough's (1972) learning projects, and the notion and movement of self directed learning. Adult education is often synonymous for self-directed learning or andragogy. Referring to the intricate nature of adult learning, Jarvis (1987) suggests that the process of learning is at the heart of life. Jarvis contends that conscious living and learning are not exactly synonymous processes, but that they are very close to each other and constantly overlap. Notably absent from this roster is the addition and direct discussion of the thrust concerning the movement regarding Canada's community college system. This absence raises the question: *To what extent are the colleges considered a part of adult education?* To think about this question, I ask, *Who is* *an adult and who decides?* (For an abbreviated history of the community college system, with a focus primarily on the Ontario community college system, see Appendix A.)

Who is an Adult and Who Decides?

One of the most complex questions contained in the theoretical literature in adult education is *who is an adult* and *who decides who is an adult*?

> Depending on the purpose, the term adult can be defined biologically, psychologically, legally, or socio-culturally. Educators of adults have long agreed that the most useful and appropriate way of defining adult or adulthood is socio-culturally, namely, with respect to social roles. An adult, therefore, is a person who has terminated continuous formal education and assumed the roles characteristic of adult status in society (Selman and Dampier, 1991, p. 30).

Selman and Dampier (1991) suggest there is no categorical answer to the question about who participates in adult education. "Is the thirty-year-old university graduate student a participant? Is an eighteen-year-old school drop-out who is now enrolled in a high school completion program a participant?" As noted by the authors Selman and Dampier, the answer to the first question, from both an administrative and conceptual perspective, is 'yes'- the thirty-year-old, is an adult participant. Suggesting the complexity of these questions, Selman and Dampier (1991) state,

> But because the university student is registered in the formal educational system, which is considered outside of adult education's purview, while the high school drop-out is registered in a program sponsored by a school board's adult education program department, administratively one will not be counted as an adult participant while the other will (p. 81).

The authors suggest it is important to take a broad view of *who* is a participant, though they make no mention of the community college context.

> The motive for identifying a participant is not to draw a line of demarcation so as to arbitrarily separate participants as being either included or excluded. Instead the emphasis is on identifying the individual's circumstances, and using these to suggest that he or she is a participant" (Selman and Dampier, 1991, p. 81).

Selman and Dampier note that the three factors used in determining an individual's circumstance, (following the emphasis and adoption of stage and developmental theories), are age, psychological maturity and social role.

> As a field of practice, adult education's concern is perceived to be the meeting of all the educational needs of a category of persons called adults that are required to be met in order that they may function as adults. Seen from this point of view, adulthood is identified with the fulfillment of a collection of roles, with a number of situations, individual and collective, which may be broadly classified under the headings of earning a living, marriage or sexual partnership, parenthood, citizenship, social and cultural activities in leisure time, and retirement (Titmus, 1996, p. 11).

As pointed out by Titmus (1996) like other definitions, the UNESCO definition fails to reconcile the different senses of adult in terms of adult education.

> Not all persons who, according to chronological and administrative criteria, are engaged in adult education, are adults in terms of social function or developmental maturity. Some of those who are, are not considered to be participating in adult education. Some people who, for instance, are to be treated as adults because of their role as wage - earners or parents, are not at an adult level of cognitive or affective maturity (Titmus, 1996, p. 11).

Noting the considerations of the meaning of the term *adult*, Titmus (1996) acknowledges the influence of Piaget's stages of childhood to the field of adult education. "It signifies a cognitively and affectivity mature human being, who, because of this maturity, learns differently and has different educational needs from those of a person at earlier states of development" (p. 11). The empirical generalizations about who is an adult, and the implicit notion that adult learners are 'good students,' threads through adult education discourse. In terms of practice and life in the community college classroom, however, these generalizations are meaningless. In my inquiry into the construction of post-secondary teacher identity, my research stories of experience told both autobiographically and through the lens of my co-participants pokes at this myth.

Participation or Enrollment? – Terms and Distinctions

The terms participation and enrollment thread through adult education discourse, and through formal and informal conversations on the community college landscape. In community college discussions about enrollment, a quantitative feature is essentially adopted when educators and administrators are asked how many students are enrolled in the college and how many students are listed on teachers' classroom lists. The statistical answer determines student enrollment numbers. Enrollment is intricately connected with administrative decisions and determines the pragmatics of program delivery. Enrollment, that is, the number of students who get admitted, and who attend the classroom, for the first quarter of the semester, get recorded and become a part of the statistical discourse.

Selman and Dampier's (1991) discussion about the contrast between the terms participation and enrollment, sheds light on the question of how the community college is embraced in the adult education movement. The term *participation* is used to describe the act of engaging in adult learning. While the term *enrollment* still denotes voluntary action, the authors argue that there is a sense of "giving over of self" to the organization. Selman and Dampier (1991) suggest that the adult enjoys "the freedom to choose whether to continue to learn or not, and also to choose the circumstances in which any learning will take place" (p. 75). The authors' use of the turnstile metaphor sheds further light on their distinctions. Selman and Dampier admit to the crassness of their metaphor, though it is not so distant from my own recent memories of students standing among a maze of ropes strung between poles leading to cash registers and automated bank machines. The scene, which occurs more frequently with shortened semesters and, therefore, more beginnings and endings, has the feel of adult education as an enterprise or a service industry.

As pointed out by Selman and Dampier (1991), the turnstile metaphor is based on the administrative necessity established in formal systems to keep count. "Such systems need to justify their existence, and the easiest way is to use quantitative measures to show activity" (p. 75). The authors note the important role of continuing education department's quantitatively showing the viability of adult education. Selman and Dampier (1991) say they are not condemning the administrative use of the term enrollment, however they emphasize the "simplistic act" of enrollment while noting the lack of emphasis on the purpose of the participation (which is learning). Interestingly, it is this "simplistic act" that actually creates various sorts of tensions for educators and learners who take part in life on the community college landscape. It seems that an administrative system, an out-of-classroom place, determines how people are treated. Classroom life experiences and student and teacher narratives are not embraced in these important statistics.

Learners have their personal reasons and purposes about why they seek education. These reasons and purposes may be different from the sponsor of the educational activity (Titmus, 1996). Since adult learners are not obligated to participate in adult education, the focus must turn to these variances if the educational experience is to have meaning for the individuals and the educational institution. Titmus (1996) notes that in many countries "adults circumvent the difficulty by turning to private agencies, which offer programs in order to make a profit" (p. 13). In a number of countries, these learning agencies are not subject to regulation or rules put in place to ensure quality and equitable treatment for the learner within the curriculum. "Since, for the most part, the agencies exist by meeting the demands of the customer who pays the full cost of study, the influence of the latter, whether an individual learner or corporate, is considerable (Titmus, 1996, p. 13).

Philosophical Foundations: Image and Identity

Adult Education Roots and Philosophical Underpinnings

My exploration of the early history of adult education was, at first about finding clarity among the murkiness of the overlapping terms and definitions. Through my search I became aware of the beginnings of adult education. I see temporality as a key component of the adult education history that relates closely to my thesis questions about student identity and my own evolving teacher identity. I am also aware of the entities, events, individuals and situations and their shaping influences on adult education as I understand it today. Within the historical beginnings in adult education, among the turmoil of societal events and changing perspectives is a place where I recognize some of the rhythms and patterns that connect to my experience as lived in the community college classroom.

In his discussion about the assumptions that underlie adult education, Lindeman (1926) asserts that adult education is inclusive of all aspects of life. Observing that adult education's purpose is to put "meaning into the whole of life," Lindeman (1926) emphasized real-life *situations*, rather than *subjects* as the approach to education. For Lindeman, the learners' experience was considered the primary resource for learning.

Though Dewey did not write specifically about adult education or focus on adults, his argument that knowledge comes through experience influenced adult education literature and Lindeman's (1926) thinking. "The whole of life is learning, therefore education can have no endings. This new venture is called *adult education* - not because it is confined to adults but because adult maturity defines its limits" (p. 18 - 19). Lindeman's early description of adult education extended Dewey's (1938) argument that education must be thought of as a life-long process, rather than a molding of young people. Lindeman stated, "From many quarters comes the call to a new kind of education with its initial assumption affirming that education is life - not a mere preparation for an unknown kind of future" (in Merriam, 1984, p. 18).

Theoretical Underpinnings

Darkenwald and Merrian (1982) state the philosophy of education involves a systematic examination of the assumptions that underlie practice, suggesting how one analyzes and interprets practice in adult education is related to the philosophical orientation brought to the task. Cranton provides a comprehensive description of a number of the disciplines and assumptions that have guided - and in some instances continue - to influence adult education researchers, theorists, and educators. Skinner's writing of behaviourism in the 1950's continues to shape the theoretical foundation of programmed, modular, and computer-assisted instruction (Cranton, 1992). Embedded in the humanist approach is adult education's learner-centered emphasis. Many of the humanist ideas are now basic principles of adult education and are evident in Brundage and Mackeracher's (1980) attention to identifying learner's needs, creating an atmosphere conducive to learning, providing warmth and support among learners, and Knowles' (1975, 1980) de-emphasizing or eliminating grading, and providing options and flexibility within the system.

The learning style literature, especially Kolb's (1984) four-phase learning cycle, is predominant in much of adult education practice and research. Cranton (1992) points out that during the late 1960's and 1970's there was considerable research concerning adult development. The work of developmental psychologists, which attempted to describe the lifetime phases of the individual, drew attention to learning and readiness to learn. The developmental work also included the stages of growth of an individual from immaturity to maturity. Gilligan's (1982) and Belenky, et al. (1986) work provided an alternate view of intellectual ego development, and focused on women's way of knowing. Cranton (1992) argues that developmental psychology has provided some of the cornerstones of adult education practice, behaviourists and humanists offer descriptions of how learning takes place, and that developmental psychologists introduce descriptions of how humans grow to maturity. Caffarella, Clark, Guido-DiBrito, Taylor and Tisdell (2000), continue to capture new ways of thinking about the life course and adult development in adult education.

According to Cranton, the term andragogy was inspired by Lindeman and incorporated into American education literature in 1968 by Knowles. Knowles defined the term as "the art and science of helping adults learn," thus differentiating andragogy from pedagogy. Knowles argued that pedagogy places the learner in a dependent situation. Eventually, in his later work, Knowles came to place andragogy and pedagogy on a continuum. This is the work that most influenced my own teaching practice and teacher identity and a discussion that continues throughout this thesis.

Brookfield and Mezirow are individuals who write, apart from Knowles, about the notion of andragogy. Brookfield criticizes Knowles' assumptions and argues that andragogy is not an empirically based theory. Brookfield (1990) stresses the need for a sound philosophical stand to guide the educator's application of skills. Mezirow (1997) describes a learning cycle that includes the learner's experiencing a "disorienting dilemma, self-examination, and exploration of options." Mezirow sees the process of critical self-reflection as one step in the learner's reformulating of their "meaning perspective." Mezirow defines adult education as a process of reflection and action:

> From this vantagepoint, adult education becomes a process of assisting those who are fulfilling adult roles to understand the meaning of their experience by participation more fully and freely in rational discourse to validate expressed ideas and take action upon the resulting insights... Rational thought and action are the cardinal goals of adult education" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 354).

In his statement, Mezirow not only suggests a parameter on who is an adult, he states that "Every adult educator has the responsibility for fostering critical self-reflection and helping learners plan to take action" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 354). He claims that transformative learning has taken place when the learner experiences and acts on the reformulation.

Today there is considerable concern in the field of adult education that a tradition is being lost. Adult educators are generally aware that a field which at one time had its own vision of the kind of society it was helping to define and to bring about is increasingly losing its philosophical roots. Adult education is becoming a service industry instead of having its own philosophical foundation (Selman et al. 1998, p. 9).

Brookfield (1986) scorns the lack of philosophy in adult education: "We are philosophically numb, concerned with the design of ever more sophisticated needs assessment, program planning models, evaluative procedures. It seems not to have occurred to us that the perfection of technique can only be meaningful when placed within a context of fundamental human or social purpose" (p. 289). Noting that philosophical ideas form the basis of adult education practice, Lawson (1996) addresses the difficulties in establishing direct connections with general philosophical ideas. Lawson states "The relationships tend to be implicit and unrecognized as part of a common cultural and political background, which is itself shaped in part by particular philosophical traditions" (p. 139).

Myths

Identifying a number of problems in understanding adult education, Brookfield (1994) regards the lack of universal understanding as a problem that has no sign of diminishing. Brookfield points to the problem of assumptions, noting the "myths etched in educator's minds" that serve as obstacles to theory development. Brookfield (1994) suggests:

> These myths, (which taken together comprise something of an academic orthodoxy in adult education) hold that adult learning is inherently joyful, that adults are innately self-directed learners, that good educational practice always meets the needs articulated by learners themselves, and that there is a uniquely "adult" learning process as well as a uniquely adult form of practice (p. 163).

These myths, as Brookfield describes them, may be what is at the root of some teachers' and students' expectations, and therefore at the root of the tensions that play out in the classroom and other places on the community college landscape.

Image

Grace (1999) highlights adult education's struggle for recognition and a valued and respected presence in Canadian and American universities. He claims that adult education's traditional image, which reflects a historical field commitment to social and remedial education from the perspective of many university academics, impeded attempts to build an image as a discipline. Along with its poor understanding and loose philosophical structure as described by some theorists, Apps (1988) addresses adult education's image problem, and suggests that this problem may be directly connected with the rupture in understanding the breadth of adult education offerings, both in degree and credit-granting situations. This lack of understanding, coupled with the fuzzy image, can affect learning opportunities for returning students, especially - as Apps points out - when classroom practice and the administration do not comprehend adult education in the classroom. Augmenting Apps' suggestions about adult education's image problem, Darkenwald questions whether the field has any visibility at all: "Another reason for the virtual invisibility of this field of practice, and scholarship is its lack of concrete intentional referent or identity" (Darkenwald, 1992, p.30).

Rubenson (1996) notes the continuously growing interest in adult education research in developed as well as in developing countries is a very recent phenomenon. During the rapid expansion of the social sciences, especially of education in the 1950's and 1960's, very little attention was paid to adult education. Rubenson suggests that the lack of interest in conducting research in adult education could be explained by the marginality of the adult education enterprise or, as in the example of the Scandinavian countries, by the independent standing adult education has had in relation to government and the public school system. Rubenson states that in addition marginality and independence, another reason for the lack of research may have been the strong influence of the need for "practicability" in programs and training of instructors.

Adult Education: A Definition

Titmus (1996) specifies that it was after 1945 that adult education became a world-wide phenomenon and had its most meaningful growth. At the 1976 General Conference of UNESCO, 142 countries were represented in contrast to 79 people attending the 1949 UNESCO World Conference. At the 1976 meeting, the following General Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education, including this definition, was approved:

> The term, "adult education," denotes the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content level, and method, whether formal or otherwise, or whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges, and universities, as well as an apprenticeship whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in attitudes or behaviour in the twofold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic, and cultural development (UNESCO, 1976 in Titmus, 1996).

The UNESCO definition is a broad understanding of the term adult education. Titmus (1996) distinguished the 1976 UNESCO definition as the most widely accepted statement of the adult education phenomenon. This definition includes the community college because it refers to an educational process that is organized and formal. Content, and what is known as subject matter in the community college system, is acknowledged, as is the learner who enters into college directly after high school.

My review of the literature reveals, however, that the actual inclusion of the community college embedded in the UNESCO definition is not actually embraced in theoretical arguments throughout much of the adult education literature. The 1976 definition, focusing primarily on the learner, does embrace the humanistic notion of self-development and social responsibility and citizenship in the context of the learner's and society's future, an aspect that is talked about in much of the theoretical literature within my review. Titmus (1996), conceiving this definition limited, states that adult education may specify three areas: human activity in which processes occur, the institutions, and/or the procedures by which adults are permitted to experience the processes in their society.

Addressing questions of structure within the field of adult education, Titmus suggests that these weaknesses and omissions are the very nature of adult education:

> The UNESCO definition begs the question of exactly how structured the processes have to be. Other categories, primary, secondary, tertiary, initial and higher education, for example, are conceived as operating within a well-defined, permanent institutional framework. In order to retain the capacity for flexible response to whatever temporary or permanent adult needs arise, adult education has traditionally avoided identification with institutionalization and the rigid constraints that have been held to be inseparable from it (p. 12)

Titmus (1996) says that with diminished attention to the principle of structure in the second half of the twentieth century, adult education is perceived as less institution-bound than other sectors. "It is widely believed that the widest possible interpretation of "organized educational processes" should be permitted in duration, degree of permanence, and the extent to which courses are structured" (p. 12).

Historical Background of Adult Education

Evidence of ongoing transition was evident during a June 2000 symposium session at the *41st Annual Adult Education Research Conference* held in Vancouver, Canada. Presenters from *Leeds University* in the United Kingdom proclaimed that the term adult education has been replaced by the term *Life-Long Learning*. This notion is further endorsed by Darkenwald (1992) in his affirmation that "Education is a life-long process, not a commodity one "gets" and then stores away for some future use" (p. 30).

An ascendant line of thinking in the literature (and as pointed out by Knowles (1980), is how education is conceptualized across the continuum of the stages and functions of a person's life, and how age is used as the prevailing criterion. As pointed out by Titmus (1996), the concept of adult education was inclusive of all ages, and was not directed only at adults. Cranton (1992) points to several theoretical writers, including Dewey (1916, 1938), who have provided the "foundations for adult education practice," acknowledging that these writers may not have been writing directly about adult education. Titmus (1996) states that however the term was initially embraced, what was behind the early initiatives in adult education was "neither specifically nor primarily a concern for adults as adults, it was wider" (p. 9).

The movement for education in France and in Germany was directed primarily at the achievement of universal schooling. In Germany, the term *volksbildung*, was not only intended to be directed at the lower orders of society. Revealed within the field's terminology, is the "influence," as Titmus (1996) suggests "of the Enlightenment and movements for the education of the people." The current use of the English term *adult education* still carries these earlier influences, as suggested by Titmus' attention to the variations in the meaning of the term adult education among individual countries. The Czech language still has *osvèta* (enlightenment) and in France there is *èductional populaire* (popular education). In German, *Volksbildung* (popular education) embraced both the ideas of the common people and, principally, that of the *Volk*, the German people or nation. In Danish *folkeoplysning* (popular enlightenment) refers both to the target population and the philosophical movement so important in its inspiration.

Through the 19th century, the division between education for adults and children expanded. Titmus (1996) notes that:

> With the achievement of universal childhood education the emphasis of movements for popular education or enlightenment shifted and concentrated more on the needs of adults. Because it was linked with the professionalization of school teaching, education as a field of study grew, but by stressing the specificity of the learning stages of childhood, its theories became increasingly inapplicable to the context of the education of adults" (Titmus, 1996, p. 9).

Titmus (1996) suggests that too little research about the history of the relationship between the concepts of child and adult education have been done to make any concluding remarks.

One distinction noted by Titmus (1996) is adult education's historical emphasis on associations, policies, purposes, and forms of organization rather than pedagogical or andragogical theory. This emphasis is one that shapes the educator's role, and I believe further differentiates teaching and learning experiences for teachers and educators in preparatory and adult education situations. The following statement from Darkenwald (1992) separates education in the formal institutional structure of the community college milieu from education for adults in informal learning structures.

> Because there must be some kind of agreement as to the purpose or goals of schools and colleges, their curricula tend to be relatively standardized and stable over time (Darkenwald, 1992, p. 30).

In my community college teaching life experience, faculty revises subject outlines throughout the college. In some programs more than in others, attempts have been made between semesters to revise and design outlines. In the past two years, however, with shortened semesters and the addition of a semester, faculty have less time for development.

> At the very least, there has to be some sort of curriculum even though students may be given considerable latitude for choices. In sharp contrast, the adult education enterprise lacks a unitary purpose and therefore anything like a curriculum. (Darkenwald, 1992, p. 30).

While the adult education theoretical discourse pays very little attention to the notion of curriculum, still, as identified by Schwab (1971), the four curriculum commonplaces, *learner*, *teacher*, *subject matter* and *milieu*, abide in the actual adult education experience.

> Instead, from the broadest perspective, anything adults want or need to learn is offered by some kind of provider of organization. Adults' learning needs are incredibly varied and ever-changing, because in our society rapid change has become the norm, especially technological change - a force that effects nearly every aspect of social structure and social relations. Such rapid change, at an ever-accelerating pace, cannot be stopped; humankind is simply stuck with it (Darkenwald, 1992, p. 30 - 31).

Darkenwald's attention to the range of aspirations and needs the learner brings to the learning situation characterizes the classroom experiences that I talk about. Darkenwald is hinting at the constant challenge explicit in the educator's task to balance and keep in check the relationship between subject matter, milieu, the educator's personal practical knowledge, and the reasons the learner became a participant in the experience. However, Titmus (1996) suggests that the break with the ideas of the regular education system be in no way a clear distinction. The blurred aspect of this distinction has lived itself out in my experience on the community college landscape. The classroom and student stories told in chapters four and six, reveal this blurred distinction. The differences in the perception and understanding of adult education is also discussed by Darkenwald, who draws on Knowles statement that,

> People have little difficulty getting a clear picture of what elementary education is (it is what goes on in the red brick building with little children) or what secondary education is (it is what goes on with adolescents in those bigger buildings near the football stadium) or what higher education is (it what goes on in those enormous college and university complexes, with youth). But adult education is much harder to picture. It takes place in all sorts of buildings and even in no buildings at all, involves all sorts of people, [and] has no set curriculum (Knowles, 1980, p. 25).

As a long-time educator in the community college system, I embraced the adult education literature into the classroom *and* my relationships with the students. Knowles' distinction between higher education and adult education in relation to milieu - that is, his attention to buildings - calls my attention to teacher identity.

Knowles' suggestion that adult education "has no set curriculum" hints at the situational aspects in Dewey's (1939) terms, of a *contextual whole*: "For we never experience nor form judgments about objects and events in isolation, but only in connection with a contextual whole" (p.891). Knowles has compartmentalized education, and embedded in his statement and apparent understanding of adult education is the exclusion of the community college. Nevertheless, as already mentioned in my teaching narrative and community college stories of experience, I embraced and applied Knowles' theoretical underpinnings directly to my teacher thinking and community college classroom practice. I argue that these teaching experiences were, in Dewey's (1938) terms, *educative*, a point I discuss extensively throughout *A Story about Learning Contracts: 1997*, written about in the next chapter. However, the nebulous nature of Knowles' conceptualization of adult education, in terms of the people involved and the places where this involvement occurs, jabs further into the questionable identity of adult education.

Functions and Purpose of Adult Education

The 1960 *American Handbook of Adult Education* emphasized that adult education concerned itself with intellectual functioning and included the terms remedial, assimilative and compensatory. Four years later Lerner and Booth introduced the terms "expansional (meaning acquiring new knowledge and skills), participational (meaning citizenship), integrational (meaning combining knowledge with experience), and personal (the development and maturing of the individual)" (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982, p. 16). Other functions of adult education are related to social justice, managing change and conflict resolution (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982; Jarvis, 1987; Selman and Dampier, 1992).

Adult education appears to maintain an identity parallel with societal purposes. Personal and social functions of adult education are related to individual and social growth and transformation. In terms of its social purpose, adult education maintains a significant role and responsibility for sustaining the social system, cultural growth, the enhancement of social relations and the transmission of knowledge (Selman and Dampier, 1992). Generally, the principle purpose of adult education was to develop and improve the whole person - to give a general or liberal education.

Historically, as Titmus (1996) points out, the needs of industrialization may have been the major stimulus of educational initiatives for adults. Along with shifts in the typologies of purposes and functions of adult education, were additional categories and changes in the dimensions of what was viewed as adult education. During the 19th century, adult education was perceived as a "lower-level activity," and in the United Kingdom and some other English-speaking countries, vocational training was not considered to be adult education. At the same time, occupational education in Norway and Sweden were not initially included in the terms *voksenoppploering* and *vuxenundervisning,* meaning adult education. In Germany, the umbrella expression *Erwachsenenbildung*, meaning adult education, came into use after the World War II, and at this time, occupational education became one its activities. Even within the dominant vocational specification in the United States, there was an emphasis among theorists of adult education and practitioners, first on earning power, followed by the incidental improvement of the worker's improvement of secular knowledge, morals, or spiritual understanding (Titmus, 1996).

My literature review reveals that how adult education is defined, thought about, and embraced, depends on personal and social context. Who is defining adult education, where they are experiencing it from - and for what reason - determines the definition, assumptions, functions, and purposes of adult education. Personal and social context, or, who, what and where, shapes the meaning of adult education. Underlying the collection of viewpoints about how adult education is best defined, and the purposes and functions within that definition, is the question about how adult education is perceived and who perceives it. How each individual, organization, agency, or institution defines adult education determines the practice and who is involved in that practice, the reasons for that involvement and where that involvement will take place.

Purpose and Adult Education in Canada

Selman and Dampier (1991) specify that the Canadian Constitution of 1867 / 1984 assigns education as a provincial responsibility. Within each Canadian province, at the post-secondary level there are a number of different arrangements among various institutions. Pointing to the federal government's past cooperation with the provinces in the occupational training field of adult education up until the late 1960's, Selman and Dampier (1991) suggest that with the neo-conservative policies in the late 1980's came the shifts in concentration to vocational and occupational training, and a movement of this work from the public to the private sector.

> It is clear that adult education is predominately a "reactive" enterprise in our society. It responds to the circumstances and the "agenda" of the community within which it functions. Whereas back in the 1930s and 1940s the field could be said to have been a social movement, with goals of its own and with a vision of what kind of society it wished to help to create, the field has changed profoundly since that time. While there are still sectors of the field which are inspired by those kinds of goals, adult education today is overwhelmingly dominated by what has been termed the "service ethic." With increased professionalization and institutionalization of the field, adult education is seen increasingly as a service to individuals rather that as a force to shape the nature of the community (Selman and Dampier, 1991, p. 63).

Adult Academic Education

How adult education is embraced in adult education research programs is an important aspect of the future. Teacher / educator development in the field of adult education is a relatively recent phenomena. Adult academic education faces many of the same challenges discussed throughout this chapter. Cranton (1989) points out that as an area of academic investigation, adult education is in the beginning stages. She argues that although instruction has been offered to adult audiences throughout history, training for adult educators at colleges or universities is quite recent. About the programs that have evolved over the past few decades, Cranton states, "With the development of courses, programs, and departments, educational researchers have turned to adult education as an area of study and have begun to describe theoretical modes relevant to instruction for adult learners" (1989, p. 4). Liverright (1964) added that it was neither possible nor desirable to specifically organize and set the content of graduate adult education in some fixed or inclusive sense. The diverse nature of adult education continues to be a major factor that inhibits setting plans and objectives that would identify competencies for graduate programs and admission into them:

> The fact that practitioners of adult education vary so in the organizations and institutions they represent, their tasks and responsibilities, background, prior education and training, and the fact that they hold such differing images of the field, has special implications for a graduate program (Liverright, 1964, p, 94).

Titmus (1989) suggests specialized departments of education in institutions of higher education were created while others were still devoting their time to the training of adult educators and the study of adult education. As these departments looked to create adult education as a profession, they sought recognition for their assertions. They also attended to establishing a code of conduct connected to a body of specific theory.

Chronology: Emergence of adult education (1917 - 1970)

Pointing to the growth of professional degree programs in Canada and United States, Liverright (1960) describes the period from 1940 to 1960 as "tremendous growth years for higher adult education." By 1968, at least twenty universities in Canada and the United States offered a doctoral program in adult education, and by 1969, 726 Ph.D's and Ed. D's in adult education had been awarded at North American universities (Houle, 1970).

Selman (1978) suggests the increase in research in adult education results mostly from program growth. Following WWII in Canada and the United States there were extensive efforts to "professionalize and techno-scientize modern practice" (Grace, 1999,

p. 99). Efforts to create a stronger profile during this time were caught between the tensions of "an emerging modern practice walking the line between identifications as a field of study and a field of practice" (Grace, 1999, p. 100). Grace describes the tensions between the desire of adult education to belong to a growing techno-scientized university tradition against the long-standing adult education narrative of being a part of a community where "ordinary citizens" were served.

> It is interesting to consider that adult education, with its history as a community based field of practice, was struggling to find space and place in academe at a time when the university itself was challenged to find an active space and place in the community (Grace, 1999, p. 100).

Graces' depiction of tension was recently made evident to me during the 41st Annual Adult Education Research, June 2000 Conference held at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. I recognized this tension as something similar to my experience on the community college landscape over the past twenty years as I crossed the institutional borders and philosophical boundaries between the various programs I taught in and administered. Not dissimilar to the tension I experienced throughout my literature search, was my search for issues and themes common to my community college teaching and research narrative. As Grace equates adult education with a "social kind of expertise," I noted adult educators' endeavors to connect academic research to the community and advocacy work. Noting Graces' explanation, the tension I experienced was in the attempts of academic adult educators' struggle to connect research and thinking about the future with the challenges facing our global society.

The Future

The number of full-time teachers, who professionally prepare teachers of adults in business, industry and government agencies, dramatically increased by 1990. This trend is expected to continue in response to the changing world. Darkenwald (1990) has predicted the following trends to continue: increase in work-related learning activities; a reduced number of courses taken for degree or credit; increased participation by women and older adults; nearly fifty percent increase in the annual proportion of the adult population engaged in continuing their education. Noting Dewey's (1916) thinking about adult life-long learning, Darkenwald (1992) states:

> Education must be reconceived, not as merely a preparation for maturity (whence our absurd idea that it should stop after adolescence) but as a continuous growth of the mind and a continuous illumination of life. In a sense, the school can give us only the instrumentalities of mental growth; the rest depends upon an absorption and interpretation of experience. Real education comes after we leave school and there is no reason why it should stop before death (Dewey, 1916, p. 25).

In his statement Dewey identifies a relationship between school and society. The relationship I focus on is between the student and the learning situation. Adopting this statement and interpreting its meaning to community college experience, I draw again on Schwab's framework of the four commonplaces of curriculum which, are subject matter, teacher, learner and milieu. In his statement that education must be re-thought, Dewey embraces Schwab's four commonplaces. He identifies the learner's responsibility in this relationship between the four commonplaces. He says that education is life experience. I take this to be what Schwab would embrace as subject matter. Though Dewey doesn't directly refer to the teacher, the reader might assume that the teacher, in Dewey's (1916) interpretation of school, *is* embraced. In the above noted statement, Dewey infers that the social milieu holds the expectation about what it means to get an education. Dewey refers to school on the learners' continuum of experience as being one place where education can happen.

Dewey's thinking resonates with the puzzles and questions embedded in my inquiry. Who is the student who enters the community college? – A learner or a student? Are the students/learners who enter the community college adults? *How* teachers and administrators, and, educational researchers and policy makers embrace the people enrolled in the community college, both shapes and is shaped by the teaching and learning situation. Relationships on the community college terrain are shaped by how teachers and administrators think about the students and the interaction of their life narratives in the milieu of the community college. How students are thought about in the relationship among Schwab's four commonplaces of curriculum – teacher, student, subject matter and milieu – shapes experience for the people living on the community college landscape. To be more hopeful about community college students' continuing growth within their own life experiences, students must be embraced as having a future, in terms of being or becoming responsible in their relationship to the curriculum commonplaces.

I have questioned the parameters of adult learning theoretical discourse as it relates, in my experience, to the community college learning situation. At this point, I draw my reader's attention to Appendix A, *Post-Secondary Education: Community College of Applied Arts and Technology: A History*. In Appendix A, I point out the relationship between Dewey's thinking and the beginning history and founding purposes of the community colleges in Canada and United States of America. In 1964, in an address to the legislature, reading from documents of the Grade 13 Study, William Davis, Minister of Education, outlined recommendations for "new and alternative programs." In Appendix *A*, I note that colleges were sought to accommodate freshmen [sic] and sophomores, and that growth of the colleges coincided with the changing stipulations for post-secondary and university education. In 1965, in his inaugural speech to the legislature, William Davis spoke to the colleges' planned abilities. Davis said all adults, and he considered the range in their diversity, would have their "relevant needs met." (For a more detailed account of Davis' address, see Appendix A). In what I later refer to as the great divide between adult education discourse and the community college movement, Dennison and Gallager (1986) suggest that the colleges became less tolerant of the learning needs of older adults. For the Canadian adult educators who were instrumental in the beginning endeavours of the community college movement, there was disappointment as the changing college structure permitted less flexibility, and moved from being learning centers for adults to teaching institutions.

Referring to Dewey's above noted statement, Darkenwald (1992) suggests that in 1916, Dewey was stating an ideal. Referring to the trends that indicate an increasing need to professionally prepare teachers of adults, Darkenwald suggests that the ideal is coming to fruition, and that the social forces that propelled it are irreversible. In Darkenwald's explanation of hopefulness, I do not see any attempt to dissolve the borders and boundaries between the categorical distinctions that still remain, and that - in my thinking, impede the direction toward Dewey's ideal.

Reviewing the literature is disturbing. After deciding to narrativize my experience of being in the literature and its meaning to community college experience, I continued to question my teacher identity. I experienced the literature, in its fragmentation and contradictions, as distilling my already fragmented teacher identity. Much of the literature that I have included in this review confronts, as I have done in this thesis, the question: "Who is the adult learner?" I found it difficult to pursue my thesis inquiry without delving into this fundamental question and into the theoretical notion behind the terms, teacher, learner and adult education.

Adult Education and Community College Teaching: A Glimmer of Hope

Earlier in my thesis, I made reference to my own involvement in Brock University's Bachelor of Education in Adult Education degree program. Focussing, for the most part, on adult education specific to community college teaching, Brock University's program responded to concerns raised by governance and college faculty about "*how* community college teaching is carried out"(Kompf, 199/45, p. 5).

> Colleges throughout Ontario have, for some years, sought to provide some level of preparation for new faculty...Cross-colleges comparisions of past experiences have shown much variation in what was offered and how it was received. Identified needs related to level of preparation for teaching in and of itself, for teaching adults...and an increased scholarly focus within the various domains of college teaching (Kompf, 1994/5, p. 13).

The five courses in the Adult Education program's core curriculum included: Foundations of Teaching and Learning In Adult Education, Curriculum Theory and Design, Instructional Approaches for Adult Learners, The College and Administration, and Developmental Paradigms and College Teachers. The principles of adult learning and notions of self-directed learning were embraced conceptually as well as in practice. The difficulty encountered by individuals working and learning within the community college system is reflected in the following quote and also in my own experience:

> The use of adult learning principles was initially met with some trepidation by some candidates while others welcomed it. Most participants had some level of familiarity with the basic principles of adult education. It was noted, vehemently at times, that the study of such principles is quite different than "using them and having them used on you! (Kompf, 1994/5, p. 15).

Adult Education: Phenomenon and Puzzle

To pursue my thesis inquiry about community college teacher identity and life on the community college landscape, I approached the literature seeking clarity on the definition of adult education. At the start of this chapter, I spoke about the complex nature of adult education. In the literature, adult education is embraced as a movement, a practice and methodology – a discipline, a philosophy, and an enterprise. I chose to think about adult education as a phenomenon in terms of a puzzle. Little is written about curriculum and teacher and student classroom lives, an aspect I went looking for in the literature, so I am left with further questions about these relationships. In many ways, my search has been narrow, though that was not my intention when I first approached this review.

A narrative perspective to the literature and the two questions – (1) *what is adult education?* (2) *who is an adult learner?* – brings integrity to the actual experience and purpose of education, learning, and personal and professional growth in the community college context. Through the personal experience methods of narrative inquiry and by thinking narratively, I have been able to delve beyond the formal and reductionist nature of stage theories and categorical thinking that artificially assumes the meaning of experience for teachers and students in the community college classroom.

The identity of the community college teacher and everyday life in the community college classroom has received little attention in academic discourse. These tensions are narratively explored in the chapters that follow. Teacher identity and the relationships connected to that identity is impacted when a field is poorly understood, and when the significance and image of that field is questioned. This complexity is furthered by the chaos and disarray often lived out on the fast and ever-changing community college. In community colleges where a broad range of multidisciplinary bodies of knowledge co-exist with teachers, students and administrators – and with all of their individual and varying life narratives meshing on a daily basis – how is the life experience to be embraced and how is curriculum shaped?

Chapter Four

In the Literature and Out of Bounds

As discussed in chapter three where I review the adult education literature, the multidisciplinary nature of the adult education literature has hindered efforts to clarify adult education discourse. The way the adult education field is divided and written about in the literature creates problems for some, and leaves room for others to criticize about the content that is not included. Speaking directly to the conference audience about the process of reviewing the adult education literature, Jarvis claimed that the literature search has to be personal and that it doesn't matter what selection, or how big it gets, -- [we] just can't cover it all." I heard familiar challenges and dilemmas, and a sense similar to my experience of feeling perplexed about where to begin my literature search and to which literature to turn.

> It is not always self-evident where to locate a piece of writing. For example, in some instances a piece about workers' education can be classified as either vocation or non-vocational education or even as a piece of academic research (Jarvis, Holford and Griffin, 2000, p. 567).

This chapter is presented in three parts. In Part I, I write my story about *being in* the literature with specific reference to my teaching life on the community college landscape. In Part II, the narrative of a faculty meeting unravels as stories about curriculum deliberation are told and reconstructed. Part II also encompasses a phantom argument with Collins, an adult education theorist who rejects self-directed learning and the learning contract. In Part III, I tell a teacher story that shows one possible relationship between curricular policy and its interaction with student narratives and a program's learning objectives.

As I tried to make meaning of the competing stories within the grand theoretical narratives as written in encyclopedias, handbooks and anthologies, the complexities, contradictions, and variances tore at my professional identity. From my review of the adult education literature and my narrative reconstruction of the community college teacher stories that follow, I begin to question the relationship between adult education theory—theory that I previously accepted readily – and the current community college situation. The stories in this chapter about field placements and learning contracts, adult learning principles and self-directed learning, inform the temporality of relationships among people, places and events on a shifting community college landscape in a changing world. The dilemmas and stories of tension that I write about here, inform a transformation in my thinking about adult education theory and the community college experience.

In this chapter, continuing with my autobiographical/narrative approach, I show the reader how some of the *grand theories* of the adult education literature shapes teaching practice in formal learning situations. I am using features of narrative inquiry to penetrate the adult education literature. I approach the readings through the *multiple I's* which consist of my teacher and researcher lens on the continuum of my own teaching experience in community based education programs and post-secondary courses in liberal studies and helping profession education. I also draw on my *personal practical knowledge,* which allows me to capture my teacher knowledge (Elbaz, 1981; Connelly and Clandinin, 1988), and my experience in the classroom. I invite my reader to join me in inquiring into adult education as both a phenomena and as a way of being with students in a past community college context. I explore alternative ways of thinking about adult education theory and its relationship to practice in the community college milieu.

Part I

Community College Teachers and the Adult Education Literature

The breadth of adult education discourse, spread among the various categories and areas of focus lacks clarity and connection, and creates confusion for the educator in the community college context. I observed this confusion in practice in the *Bachelor of Education in Adult Education* program at *Brock University* when I was a student in 1994. My colleagues, who were educators from a variety of disciplines, seemed to be grappling with their own meaning of adult education. During our *Foundations in Curriculum* course, I recall the professor leading a brainstorming session entitled, *What is Adult Education?* In a span of ten to fifteen minutes, an extended list of words, terms, and phrases were strewn across the chalkboard in the classroom. The definitions, perceptions and understandings of the meaning of adult education differed widely among my peers. I recall this tension enduring throughout each of the five courses in the program.

Bell (1993) reminds us that "this confusion over terms reflects the complexity of the phenomenon" (p. 132). Cranton (1992) further captures the sense of breadth and its impact when she describes adult education as taking place in "such a wide variety of contexts that it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to describe a unifying framework or theoretical model for the field" (p. 1). In her discussion about the multidisciplinary nature of the literature on literacy, Bell (1993) describes a similar phenomenon in defining literacy and what it means to be literate. In her discussion about these complexities, Bell cites Levine (1986):

> An endless series of disagreements and controversies will be encountered which reflect that we are dealing with a complex amalgam of psychological, linguistic and social processes layered one on top of another like a rich and indigestible gateau. Different varieties of academic specialists cut slices out of this cake with the conceptual equipment their disciplinarily training has taught them to favour (p. 22).

I am drawn to Levine's point about defining literacy because its resonates with my exploration into the adult education literature, and with my experience of taking segments of it into the classroom—as I did with the subject material of the principles of adult learning course. Levine's point echoes my own experience and thinking about, and defining, adult education. I can picture the complexity of the amalgam of my own teaching situation, specifically at faculty planning meetings. In a small faculty of less than six people (other departments in the college are much larger), I find that we rarely agree about our roles and tasks as educators. The debate about whether to describe the individuals in our classrooms as students or learners, adults or adolescents punctuates our discussions at promotion and faculty meetings. As each teacher's teaching narrative history unfolds, the meetings often times become unpalatable.

The theories of teaching and adult education that I grew up with as a teacher, shaped my teacher identity on the terrain of the community college. In light of my teacher experience in several different corners of the community college system and as I moved across philosophical boundaries between the institutional borders within the same community college, I observed little to no attention to the adult education literature that I came to embrace. In the literature, when it came to speaking to or informing my classroom and landscape experiences, I felt quite *adrift*.

Patterns of language and confusion over terms in adult education contexts continue to shift. The impact of issues of language, discourse and texts on adult education research in relation to the viewpoints associated with post-structionalism and postmodernism are noted by Clarke, Edwards and Harrison (2000). Words and terms on the college landscape are embraced differently by a vast number of people. Perhaps this same diversity, and the complexity that accompanies it, is what the adult education theorists attempt to capture in the literature. But where are the teacher voices? Where are the descriptions and stories of specific situations and contexts within the adult education teaching and learning community? How are the curriculum and students understood?

Curriculum-Not-Included

The adult education literature uses the term program development.

> What is distinctive about program development in adult education is the blending of roles and tasks that are typically separate and distinct in preparatory education. Program development ... incorporates major elements of the functions of instruction and administration (and often counselling too) and therefore involves tasks traditionally associated with the roles of both teacher and administrator (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982, p. 16).

In my thinking about teaching and teacher identity on the community college landscape, unlike much of the adult education literature, I incorporate the term *curriculum* as part of my discussion. How can it be that the term curriculum is not part of the adult education literature, but as a teacher teaching and learning on the community college landscape, it's all I can think about?

My original thinking was to approach the adult education literature seeking Schwab's (1973) four commonplaces of curriculum: subject matter, teacher, student and milieu. The connections that I made were minimal. One of my most significant findings, and the biggest surprise of all, was to find that the term curriculum is not embraced in the grand theoretical adult education narrative. My response to this aspect of the adult education literature also mirrored my experience when I attended adult education academic conferences. Streumer and Tuijnman (1996) identify reasons for the indifference to curriculum development in adult education. Streumer and Tuijnman assert that the opposition to "explicit curricula" has been particularly powerful in countries where teachers and policymakers have accentuated the nonformal character of adult education (p. 473). In most countries, as Streumer and Tuijnman point out, adult education responded spontaneously and sporadically to both private demands and public needs. Within these contexts, adult education has held "virtual autonomy in deciding about the purpose, goals and content of their offerings…" (p. 473). A central principle in adult education practice, as Streumer and Tuijnman (1996) mention, has been co-determined by the notion that adults are voluntary and self-directed learners who should be autonomous in choosing the competencies, body of knowledge and the methods in teaching and learning. Streumer and Tuijnman proclaim that the notion that adult education is primarily learning for its own sake, has been to the detriment of subjects primarily linked to job training that call for precise requirements for content and sequencing of curriculum.

After realizing the term curriculum is neglected throughout the adult education theoretical discourse, I felt further adrift from a teaching identity that has evolved temporally over twenty years of teaching experience where curriculum and my teacher identity intermingle. The following questions of identity evolved: Here I am a teacher of adults, who has always focused on curriculum. What have I been thinking about? Is it any surprise that I have felt out-of-sorts both on the post-secondary community college landscape and with the adult education literature?

Sitting in the reference section of the library, surrounded by large, heavy and dusty books that for the most part still had their stiff bindings, the complexities and confusions within adult education became even more apparent. I sat asking myself, which literature? and, where to go next? I next sought out theses from the adult education department. I came across several, one of which was the thesis of Jane Dalton. The realization that the term curriculum is neither embraced in teacher dialogue in the post-secondary sector of the college is promoted further by my reading of Jane's thesis. I know Jane and I know how she works with her students. She was a student in the first Life Skills Coach training program that I co-designed and facilitated in 1984. In her thesis, Jane describes herself as working with students who have been marginalized. She was writing about a very specific program, *Ontario Basic Skills*, in a very specific context, which was a small program in a rural community. Her thesis is about co-learning. She draws on Schwab's four commonplaces and this was of interest to me because I also began by using Schwab's commonplaces as an analytic tool. Jane appeared to have an easier time than I did. I noticed that her theoretical underpinnings and use of the literature, not surprisingly, included many of the authors I use in my inquiry. Jane's story about working with her students could also be my story. We shared similar philosophical approaches to working with students who have been marginalized. In our work with students, in informal and community based contexts, both Jane and I embraced the term curriculum. Among the differences between Jane and my teaching narratives is that she maintained her focus and continued to work in the community based milieu while I entered into the post-secondary sector of the college.

When moving from community based to post-secondary education the teaching milieu shifts dramatically. The literature that Jane drew on to position her discussion about co-learning shed light on one of the difficulties that I was experiencing while in the literature. The patterns, rhythms and spatial qualities of a teacher's day are dramatically different in the post-secondary educational milieu. As I have already indicated, it is with this border crossing that my teacher identity begins to unravel.

Border Crossings and Crossing Boundaries

Earlier in my thesis, I storied my experience of crossing the institutional borders and the philosophical boundaries from community based to post-secondary teaching at a community college. Furthering my notion of border and boundary crossing, I draw on Anzaldùa's (1987) notion of borders: "Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge" (p.3). Being in the borderland captures the essence of my struggle as I move back and forth between the literature sources, seeking touchstones in the practical aspects of my teaching experience. Not only do I find myself feeling on the outside of the literature in my practical world, I also feel an outsider on the landscape where I grew up as a teacher.

Anzaldùa continues:

> A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants (Anzalduã, 1987, p. 3).

Anzaldùa discussion is about the actual physical borderland of the state of Texas and southwest Mexico border. At this meeting point, or edge as she calls it, people from different races occupy the same territory. The overwhelming tension that is provoked when two or three cultures meet resonates with some of the points of tension I am living and writing about. My review of the adult education literature and attendance at academic conferences provided a lens into the strong opposition – among some adult educators – to the extension of formal curricula in adult education contexts. When I shifted from an informal community based teaching situation into post-secondary education, I entered into a physical space where different worlds of adult education collided.

When I crossed the border and boundary from community based education to the post-secondary program, I was quite surprised to observe and absorb a number of differences and contrasts in how teachers relate to their students. I felt like I was in a borderland. Unlike the teaching and learning milieus I had been a part of, not all community college teachers endorsed the students' right to make their own decisions about their futures. There didn't always seem to be a sense that the teacher could learn from the student—that the teacher was also a learner. In the community based program, the students took a larger role in evaluating their own progress. I essentially moved from a teaching milieu where evaluation took the form of student self-review into a situation where students underwent formal tests and essay writing. Grading papers and multiple-choice tests had not been a part of my earlier teaching world. With the disconnectedness among students, teachers and the curriculum, my teacher identity was shattered.

Probing into the history of my teaching narrative has rendered insight into the nature of my relationships with colleagues and students in the past, and how these relationships played a significant role in my acceptance, advocacy and application of adult education theory in my practice.

Thinking about Curriculum, Adult Education and Community College Experience

In 1989, Colin Titmus wrote the following statement in an opening chapter to *Lifelong Education for Adults: An International Handbook* (1989):

> There has indeed been little study of curriculum to back up animated discussion founded purely on value judgements. The principle that each person should be free to choose what he or she studies has obscured to some degree the possibility that free choice may not result in what the individual or society most needs. In some fields, work has been done in curriculum studies, but the question of the content of adult education requires further study. (Titmus, 1989, p. xxxii).

Streumer and Tuijnman (1996) suggest that in some countries, the opposition to the discussion of curriculum in adult education is slowly changing. In some countries, as adult education programs are integrated into the "formal system," with public funding and credential education, Streumer and Tuijnman (1996) point out that:

> Demands have been placed on the content of adult education, particularly on programs that carry a degree of formal equivalency in the regular system. Increased institutionalization and especially the weakening of the liberal tradition in adult education have also led to increased control and a greater degree of curriculum determination by external agencies (p.473).

In 1996, Streumer and Tuijnman (1996) contend that specialized fields of human resource development and curriculum technology have made important contributions to curriculum in adult education discourse. However, the authors declare that despite these contributions and increased professionalization, serious research is needed on the position of curriculum in adult education.

As noted by Connelly and Clandinin (1988), it is likely impossible to arrive at a definition of curriculum that will satisfy everyone. Connelly and Clandinin point out that many curriculum authors offer their readers a taxonomy of concepts of curriculum, noting that it is important to remember that each taxonomy is based on its own criteria. In Connelly and Clandinin's terms, curriculum is a dialectic, where all the various perspectives can be considered. The central idea of Connelly and Clandinin's view, is that all teaching and learning questions be looked at from the point of view of the people involved – that is the educator and the students. These authors believe that curriculum development and planning are basically questions of teacher thinking and teacher doing. For them, the teacher's *personal practical knowledge* determines all matters of significance relative to classroom planning and classroom conduct. Personal practical knowledge, as a key term, allows thinking about the curriculum from different points of view and with different criteria coming together. Based on personal practical knowledge, teachers tell stories to live by, and construct an identity for themselves.

My reading of the literature resembles a personal response to abstract and impressionist artwork. How I experience an abstract impressionistic painting that was given to me, as a wedding gift is similar to how I feel when I am in the adult education literature. The painting hangs centrally in my dining room and I frequently take in its presence. I realize that the temporal and rhythmic qualities of my daily life determine how I view this painting's meaning. The artist's soft and sometimes indefinable brush strokes seem almost invisible, causing the image to lose clarity. In thinking metaphorically about the lack of clarity in the adult education literature, and considering Brookfield's (1986) suggestion – that adult education is "philosophically numb," and Lawson's (1996) premise that philosophical notions are present, but ever so subtle – the soft brush strokes on the painting's canvas resemble the fading lines between larger general philosophical ideas and adult education discourse.

Not only is the literature, to use Brookfield's language, philosophically numb, but as an educator, I also began to feel uncertain about where to stand on a changing community college landscape with a shifting philosophical ground. The following stories about curriculum deliberation and a teacher's disillusionment and frustration capture the shifting and colliding notions of one college-teaching group's shared program curriculum. The first story, Working Toward a Common Curriculum, is about a full-time and part-time faculty group, coming together for the first time to deliberate (Schwab, 1973) a common curriculum and the shared philosophical principles of adult education (Brundage and Mackeracher, 1980).

Part II

Working Toward a Common Curriculum

In the winter and spring of 1995, ten faculty members and two administrators from the full-time and continuing education Helping Profession programs, participated in curricular deliberations. The college's director of professional development was invited to chair the discussion.

> It is he [sic], as chairman, who monitors the proceedings, pointing out to the group what has happened in the course of their deliberations, what is currently taking place, what has not been considered, what subordinations and superordinations may have occurred which affect the process in which all are engaged (Schwab, 1973, p. 505).

Belief statements and possible solutions—connected with the program's philosophy, communication, teamwork and roles of teachers and administrators—were captured on chart-paper and later distributed through the meeting's minutes. Discussion at the winter meeting revolved around three key areas: gaps in the program, integration of principles of adult learning, and program uniqueness – college versus university curriculum.

In preparation for the meeting that followed in the spring, faculty members agreed to distribute knowledge about the history of the program and information about the traditionally shared philosophy – self-directed learning and principles of adult learning. For continuity, a program administrator volunteered to compose three questions for faculty members' planning and visioning for curriculum: 1. What changes do you foresee in the Helping Profession field in the 21st century? 2. How do you see these changes impacting and influencing the current program? 3. Where do we go from here?

At the spring meeting, faculty members and the same two administrators reconvened to continue deliberation of the curriculum. The following agenda was set:

1. *Great Expectations*
2. *What will the Future be?*
3. *What do we want our students to know?*
4. *What do we want our students to be?*
5. *What do we want our students to be able to do?*
6. *Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Courses*

During the winter meeting, gaps and needed changes had been identified. Participation in the curriculum meeting included the larger social milieu and forecasts about the future of the helping profession and value and belief statements about attitudes, knowledge-base and practical skills that the students will require to be successful in their field. In some ways, the interplay throughout the 1995 winter and spring curriculum meetings was analogous to Schwab's discussion about how effective curriculum decisions are made. For example, unlike any other department curriculum meeting in the past, (or since), the director of professional development acted as the meeting chair.

Prior to the 1995 curriculum meeting, the Helping Profession faculty, myself included, often positioned the subject-matter as the ruling commonplace. Noting that subject-matter is a body of knowledge and one of the commonplaces of education, Schwab's following question, points to a consideration when choosing one ruling commonplace.

> Can any planner, any teacher, know enough, know variety enough, and choose widely enough among so many bodies of knowledge to plant in the learning area the appropriate provocatives of interest and learning? (Schwab, 1973, p. 510).

Schwab asserts that the commonplaces – teacher, student, subject-matter and milieu – must be honoured and coordinated. Though all of the commonplaces don't necessarily need to be equal, Schwab suggests that in curriculum planning all commonplaces have to be taken into account to make a curricular argument.

> There are times and places when the welfare of the state is of paramount importance (during threat of war for example) and what contributes most to the future happiness of individual students, or justice to a subject-matter, or the bents of teachers, must take subordinate positions. There are times when the state's welfare can be relegated to secondary importance in deference to what education might confer on individual lives. And both may be subordinated at time to the desirability of recruiting some of the best students to the service of the subject-matter (Schwab, 1983, p. 241).

Schwab maintains if one commonplace is positioned as dominant, the current condition of the curriculum, existing student situation, and the encompassing environment must be equally considered in light of each one of the commonplaces. To make a strong subject matter curricular argument, Schwab suggests that each commonplace must be examined so that the consequence to other individual commonplaces is understood.

> … recall what occurs when subject-matter concerns initiate the planning of curriculum. Subject matter are bodies of knowledge. As knowledge, they tend to shut out other educables: competencies, attitudes, propensities, values…. it is virtually impossible to question whether that subject matter as a whole is desirable in the curriculum and whether it should be given much or little time and energy—inevitably taken from other subjects or other curricular activities (Schwab, 1973, p. 510).

At the 1995 meeting, with teacher and administrative representation of the full-time and part-time programs, the incentive was to work toward a common curriculum. Meeting transcripts also outlined what the teachers expected from their collaborative:

Clearer understanding of part-time and full-time program "fit"
Explore possibilities of revising subject/curriculum
Competencies graduates need – program outcome "fit"
New understanding of who WE the Helping Professional program/team are?
Mission
Where do our graduates fit?
Entrance – selection for success
Impact of CSAC [College Standards and Accreditation Council. 1993].

The chair directed the faculty members to divide into three work-groups to discuss the following questions:

a) Discuss what each of you see to be the strengths of the subject area/program in which you teach.
b) Identify areas that you feel may need to change for increased effectiveness.
c) Working with the subject outlines for your program, identity objectives/outcomes that are CONSISTENT with the common view identified earlier in the workshop and those that are not - list these for discussion for the next workshop.

Records from the curriculum meeting showed that some teachers believed pulling "together existing information on the common philosophy" – self-directed learning and principals of adult learning – was one possible solution to working toward an effective and common curriculum between the two programs. Related to this notion, faculty members also suggested that a "commitment to theory, practice, program goals and program philosophy, such as anti-racism, anti-sexism, etc." should be a part of their deliberation. In consideration of uniqueness and difference from university helping profession programs, details from the meeting show that faculty members identified the subject-matter of Principals of Adult Learning (PAL) "as a foundation." The records also indicate agreement that student/field placement supervisor information packages "should include PAL material."

In a facilitated discussion led by the meeting chair, the teachers communicated belief statements about each existing subject-area in the program. The chart below outlines the faculty group's collective belief statements.

Statement of Belief	Who
PAL Orientation course for faculty & students	Part-time & full-time faculty who teach PAL
Faculty audit current PAL courses	
PAL becomes part of who we are – how we define the program.	Team part of Vision Day

Faculty members proceeded to record strengths and weaknesses for each subject-matter area within the full-time and part-time programs. About the Principles of Adult Learning subject, the faculty members identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Computer component	Text choice
Bridge between here and there	Overlap with xx
Learning Contract	Students not yet adults
Kolb's theories	Complaints
Group Work	Resistance from students
Learning model – self-directed learning to college life.	Too basic for some
Prepare & survive college life.	Does not tie in with self-directed model
Self-awareness	
Keeping a journal	
Teacher training	

Though not shown here, all of the program's subject areas were reviewed in the same manner as indicated above. During the curriculum deliberation, the subject matter for the practicum and field-placement seminar, (offered in semesters two, three and four), was found to compliment and overlap with the Principals of Adult Learning course.

Field Seminar

Strengths	Weaknesses
Safe place to talk about placement issues	Classes too large
Group problem solving	Connect linkages between part-time & full-time programs
	Is there a focus? Difference between 1st & 2nd year placement.

Field Practicum, Semester 2,3 & 4

Strengths	Weaknesses
Hands on	Bad matches
Reality check	Funding
Student responsibility (self-directed learning model)	Weak supervision in community
Learning plan (Learning Contract)	Sessional teachers supervising placements
Manual	Lack of follow-up
Integration of theory & practice	Part-time model – administration problems
Excellent learning tool – discussion & reflection	Communication problem
Block placements	Frequency of part-time offering
	Summer placements
	Competition

From the account of the 1995 review of the curriculum, it is suggested that decisions precipitated from the meeting's primary focus on a subject-matter commonplace curricular argument. Nonetheless, when the faculty members addressed the question, *what will the future be?,* the written story of the curriculum meeting also captures the considerations of the social-milieu commonplace.

Grass-roots work in the community (agency, other) vs. institution
Changes in work life (jobs)

Community based practice – Community as client – (individual, group, and family)
Direction by client
Shift away from clinical counselling – more informal counselling
Project Legislation
Blurring of roles – mental health/social service work
Economics – resources, competition for students
Collaboration with other related programs in college
Multicultural
Options for Special Certificates
Use of technology/email
Stress on faculty (Diversity of learners)
Students more confrontational – Rights
Faculty sense of powerlessness – feeling harassed
Organizational restructuring – team, participative management
Elderly population on increase

Implicit in the meeting archive, is the teachers' concern with the larger social-milieu and the future direction social change was carving for the helping-profession field.

Though the present student situation was not explicitly evident in the report, the faculty member's reference to "multicultural, diversity of learners and confrontational students," may point to the teachers' more subtle attention to the circumstances of current students. Through the process of the teachers constructing a prioritized list to the question, *what do we want our students to know?,* the student commonplace was also considered, in terms of the learner's future The following summary-statements synthesize the collaborative list of subject-matter areas that the teachers considered critical to the curriculum.

> 1: Following a generalist approach to the curriculum, students will obtain self-awareness and self-knowledge. Students will know about cultures other than their own. Students will have the knowledge to access the social service system so that they can advocate for their clients. Students will develop an awareness of interpersonal relationships within social policy and micro/macro issues. Students will comprehend learning styles and know how to think critically.

> 2: Students will attain general knowledge about different social work perspectives – feminist, ecological, structural, etc. Obtaining general practice skills, students will demonstrate a conscious application of 'self as a tool,' using relational and empathy skills.
>
> 3. Students will know and demonstrate skills in "community development, … communication models." and "team models." Students will acquire "problem solving, … generic skills," and "basic computer knowledge."

The teachers also identified what they wanted their students to *be*, and what they wanted the students to be able to *do* upon graduation. The first three professional attributes listed on the lengthy "BE" list were "openness, flexibility, and adaptability." In regard to the prioritized "DO" list, the following details and subject-matter areas were identified:

Able to write clearly
Competent verbal communication
Plan, organize and implement projects
Informal counselling
Able to facilitate groups, meetings
Time management skills, ability to prioritize

2. Administrative paperwork (reports, logs, etc.)
Stress management skills
Do research
Computer skills
Networking skills
Community development skills
Process-recording
Advocacy skills
Test writing skills
Creating problem solving
Critical analysis – level 4
Presentation skills – verbal, networking, meeting skills

Continuing to direct the teachers' attention to subject matter, the chairperson proceeded to focus on the courses that both programs had in common. For each existing course, strengths and weaknesses were identified and recorded onto chart-paper. The written account of the meeting does not attest to cross-examination and scrutiny of preceding lists in the discussion about individual courses. However, in a follow-up memo to the administrator of the part-time Helping Profession program, the full-time program administrator noted that agreement was reached on how the differences in the day and evening curriculum areas could be resolved. On June 1, 1995, specific to the Principal of Adult Learning course, the administrator wrote:

> ... The group agreed that Principles of Adult Learning should be redesigned as a college skills subject. The subject would still include an adult learning component but would be expanded to include other skills necessary for success in college.
> The curriculum would include:
> -adult (self-directed) learning
> -time management
> -public speaking and presentation
> -library orientation
> -computer skills
> - writing a research paper

On June 8, 1995, in a memo to the full-time program faculty about the same meeting, the administrator wrote:

> Thanks for your work in the meeting on Monday. It was a very productive session.
> We identified three areas of the curriculum that should be strengthened in order to meet the mission statement:
> -ethics
> -information technology applications
> -reading, writing, speaking skills
> It was agreed that reading, writing, speaking skills would be taught in every subject and would be incorporated into the grading scheme of each subject. Please ensure that this is reflected in the outcomes and evaluation sections of your subject outlines for this fall.

Though the course Principles of Adult Learning, has undergone a number of alterations since the curriculum meeting in 1995, the full-time college calendars between 1993 and 1998/99, maintained the following description:

> This subject introduces the student to the theory and practice of self-directed learning as a valuable option in the learning process. Students will

> develop their own competence as inquirers and will explore the practical applications of andragogy.

Between the years of 1993 and 1996, PAL was a two-hour weekly subject. The 1996/97 full-time calendar indicates that PAL was increased to three-hours. In 1998/99, PAL underwent another change, and became a one-hour weekly subject. During these alternations, the course description remained constant.

The unchanging calendar description does not reflect my memory or observation of PAL receiving – more than other courses in the program – a great deal of scrutiny. Schwab's conception of curriculum may help to explain the attention PAL received from the faculty.

> Curriculum is what is successfully conveyed to different degrees to different students, by committed teachers using appropriate materials and methods, of legitimated bodies of knowledge, skill, taste, and propensity to act and react, which are chosen for instruction after serious reflection and communal decision by representatives of those involved in the teaching of a specified group of students who are known to the decision makers. (1983, p. 240).

To convey at any one-time, the means and outcome of PAL as an experience in curriculum, is not an easy task. In my recollection, end-of-semester meetings and teacher-discussion about the students' learning-needs, often resulted in specific recommendations for additional subject-matter content to be covered in PAL. In this way, the course Principles of Adult Learning responded to the teachers' interpretation of current students' circumstances. From these faculty discussions, subject-matter areas such as: skills in reading and writing; using the library resources for research; preparing for tests and exams; and managing time and stress, were included in PAL's curriculum.

Specific to the changing nature of in-coming students and knowing who they are, is also particularly challenging to the temperament of PAL. In the history of the Helping Profession program, fewer students entered directly from high school. Past students' diverse, and, sometimes, extensive work histories enhanced the learning process in the classroom. As well, it seems with larger classes and students who are younger and less experienced, that contesting the notion of moving along the continuum from teacher-directed to more self-directedness in their learning, conflict and chaos in the current classroom is more formidable than in the past. Often times, students' complaints about PAL are interwoven with feelings and actions of resistance and tension ensued in transformative learning situations.

Over time, the level of commitment to the inaugural propensity for adult learning theories to permeate the program's philosophy, shifted to respond to the personal practical knowledge of individuals teaching in the program. Often, in the absence of some of the full-time teachers' enthusiasm to teach PAL, sessional-teachers, with no previous teaching experience or prior knowledge of self-directed and adult learning principles, have been hired to teach PAL. Over time, it appeared the level of commitment to adult learning theories migrated from the actual practice of self-directed and adult learning principles to a skills-level course about how to survive in community college.

Life without PAL (Principles of Adult Learning)

Arriving Back onto a Shifting Community College Landscape

In spite of the changes made to time allotment and subject matter, the published description of PAL has been consistent in the college calendar for the past eight years. At one time, the course was considered relevant enough to be offered in a three-hour format. With fewer hours allocated, the curriculum has been significantly reduced and therefore modified from its original content. With an additional computer component and fewer hours of instruction, content previously considered important, has been lost, perhaps indicating there has been a shift in the current faculty members' approach and thinking about adult learning and the skills and support students require to succeed in the program.

The teaching story told here, embraces my experience of returning from my sabbatical in the 1996/97 semester. To my horror, during my absence Principles of Adult Learning, was modified – taking it from the original three-hour session format to a weekly one-hour class. In addition, the course included a computer instruction component. Silently and cynically, I guessed the decision was ensconced in the idea of adhering to the looming emphasis on computer technology. I felt as though the program I was previously a part of had seemingly been stripped of one of its philosophical foundations. When I re-entered the community college landscape upon completing a year long sabbatical, I felt as though I encountered another border crossing. While I was away from the college, landscape fragments had continued to transform and shape curricular decisions among the individuals living on the community college milieu.

Though the course name and calendar description remained, essentially, and in my mind, the pragmatics of self-directed learning and the experience of getting there, had been dropped from the program curriculum. I had taught the course in both formats – two-hour and three-hour segments, and even then I felt challenged by the temporal dimensions of the course. In my view, the experiential nature of the course was vital to students' learning about themselves and others as learners. It was my belief that if students were to experiment for themselves alternative approaches to learning they must have an opportunity to experience the process rather than just be told about it. I also clutched at the notion that the helping professional working in instructive community settings, will be prepared with an understanding of adult education theory and an awareness that individuals approach life transformation, in various ways. Once depleted, I had the sense there was little holding the curriculum pieces together. Feeling substantiated with a theoretical foundation, I argued that the calendar's program description was grounded in a central principle in adult education practice. When I pointed out to my colleagues that our published program description was framed in terms of students being "challenged and supported in their attempts to take responsibility for their own learning," one colleague suggested that "we can just take the line out of the calendar."

Standing Off-the-Landscape and Looking On

At the time, and for some time after, I did not accept my colleague's suggestion as a reasonable thing to do. My memory of the dialogue that ensued during the intensity of the 1995 faculty meeting, had in someway, endorsed my understanding that I was not alone in my acceptance and application of adult education theoretical thinking. I wrote about my colleague's renouncement, which I embraced as abandoning adult education thinking, in several different ways. I wrote victoriously as if to suggest at my colleague's shortsightedness. To learn more about my own riposte to my colleague's reply and my affinity to the Principles of Adult Learning (PAL) course, I went behind the covers of the college calendars and examined the referred to faculty-meeting proceedings and official memos. I also had in-depth discussion with one colleague, who like myself, loved teaching PAL.

The rapid sequence of events captured in my story about curriculum change shows how teachers can experience a changing landscape. While at a distance from the community college, I have been thinking about the narrative history of this particular story of experience. Stepping-out-of the college and then in-again, has given me a way to think about the sequence of events embedded in this particular story of experience on a shifting ground. This story captures details about a landscape that is changing. This story is also about a teacher who re-enters a shifting landscape, and her response to curricular decisions that seemed to dismantle matters of significance, relative to her beliefs about curriculum development and planning.

Had I been at the college, participating in curricular decisions shaped by the shifting landscape, I would have defended what I thought we would be giving up if PAL was no longer a part of the curriculum. While I was in the literature, and feeling out-of-bounds, I encountered an adult education theorist, Michael Collins, who like my colleagues, but for different reasons, did not embrace adult education as I had come to adopt it.

A Story about a Teacher's Personal Practical Knowledge and Adult Education Thinking

In this story I begin, with a description of my past experience teaching the course Principles of Adult Education (PAL) to first-semester students in a helping profession diploma program. Teaching PAL was an experience that shaped my sense of who I am as a teacher and who the college students were as learners. I discuss my teaching experience in terms of putting the grand narrative of adult education, based on Knowles, Brundage and Mackeracher, to practice. The term *curriculum* is used throughout my story of experience. As well, I interweave my response to Michael Collins' criticism of the learning contract throughout this story. Had I been on the community college landscape, I can imagine that I would have presented a comparable curricular argument to maintain components of PAL in the Helping Profession curriculum. In this chapter, I am presenting my voice, in a phantom way, to say what we would be giving up from the curriculum.

At age twenty-two, I encountered and readily accepted Knowles' (1975) notions about moving along the continuum from teacher-directed to self-directed learning and Brundage and Mackeracher's (1980) principles of adult learning.

Following Knowles, the students, who were addressed as learners, were introduced to the continuums between pedagogy and andragogy, and teacher-directed and self-directed learning. Often times, both in the literature and in my teaching practice, I felt isolated as I referred to my students as adults or budding adults. Embracing curriculum as *lived experience* on a continuum that pushes toward the future, shaped my acceptance of the students in my community college classrooms as adults.

Brundage and Mackeracher's (1980) theories in adult education became my testament. As a master narrative, and in what Fulford (1999) characterizes as pervasive, I gobbled up their theoretical thinking, perspectives and assumptions about working with adult learners. In many ways, to borrow from Fulford (1999), Brundage and Mackeracher's work became my *dwelling place* and their principles of adult learning were foundational to the course PAL. However, over time, I was left feeling alone.

I believe that I partly formed my sense of myself as an adult educator around the *grand narratives* (Fulford, 1999) of Knowles, Brundage and Mackeracher. Cranton (1989) points out that Brookfield states "andragogy is also now, for many educators and trainees of adults, a badge of identity" (p. 9).

What these theorists wrote about what an adult education milieu should look like fit my own story of experience working alongside the students in life skills and academic upgrading in the context of the community based programs from 1980 to 1988. It is no wonder I felt so much loss when the PAL course was chopped from the program's curriculum. A piece of my identity felt stripped away.

I recall deep feelings of regret about what I believed our curriculum and our program could be in terms of its meaning to helping profession education. Like the program I transferred from – and referred to earlier as *my utopia* where people came from far and wide to look at our curriculum and hear our stories – I had the notion that the Helping Profession program I taught in could be another "state-of-the-art" program. My ambition was grounded in my earlier teaching experience when I felt pride and accomplishment about the curriculum and the work we did with our students.

Five years following my shift to the post-secondary sector of the college, around my fourteenth teaching year, when a sense of loss and isolation bubbled to the surface. I quietly entered into the *Bachelor of Education in Adult Education* program at *Brock University*, the first degree of its kind in Canada. I was missing the rhythm and tone of collaboration of community based teaching and learning situation where I worked closely with my students, women colleagues, and the curriculum. I believe that after my return to school and experience in the *Brock University* program, the sense of isolation I was experiencing on the landscape of the college system actually heightened. In the context of my thinking more deeply about curriculum, teaching and learning, I felt more alone, but I had never felt brave or strong enough to tell my colleagues that I was ashamed of our curriculum.

In my mind, with the changes to the curriculum, the Helping Profession program's focus no longer supported the students' transition from teacher-dependent learner to self-directed learner. This curricular shift was at the source of my shame about the program's revised curriculum.

On the Edge

When I reflect on Schwab's (1971) statement that "the field of curriculum is moribund. It is unable, by its present methods and principles, to continue its work and contribute significantly to the advancement of education," (p. 287). I wonder if the harshness of Schwab's word "moribund" created for him, anything like the response I received from my colleagues when, at a faculty meeting, I announced with passion, that I was ashamed of our program's curriculum. Had I been introduced to Schwab by this time in my teaching journey, I may have had the insight to understand the meaning of the following statement.

> The frustrated state of the field of curriculum is not a sickness peculiar to that field, nor is it a condition, which warrants guilt or shame on the part of curriculum practitioners. All fields of system intellectual activity are marked by rhythms, which involve such crisis (p. 299).

Had I encountered Schwab, I may have thought of our program curriculum as *broken*, rather than something for me to feel shame about. The program curriculum, which consisted of twenty-one courses over a four-semester period, felt fragmented. I am not suggesting that Knowles' notion of andragogy, and Brundage and Mackeracher's principles were prevalent through the program subjects and teaching philosophies in any pure sense, but with its prevailing presence there was a sense that pieces of the curriculum were being held together. From speaking publicly about our program and entering conversations with members of the advisory committee and field placement supervisors, I had the notion that our students were held in high regard because of their introduction to the knowledge and experience of adult learning principles and student-directed learning. Given that many of the students graduated and entered the social service milieu and agency work that might entail informal and non-formal teaching in the community, I considered the *Principles of Adult Learning* course an essential ingredient in the student's life in the program and to their future work. I believed that our students needed to know about adult education, its history, purposes and functions as it is related and connected to the helping profession field.

Learners were introduced to Knowles' (1975) concept of the *Learning Contract,* which further shaped my teaching practice and my teacher identity. The learners were introduced to problem solving in terms of Dewey's notion of the learner setting and following through on a hypothesis. Through learning contracts, the students in my classes were introduced to scientific inquiry.

Malcolm Knowles' methodological approach, in particular, has attracted an enormous following among professional adult educators. Hence, the methodology of self-directed learning, in one form or another, has been applied to many kinds of formal adult education settings, from basic literacy training through to the professional preparation of medical doctors and Ph.D. students. My course outline was designed around Malcolm Knowles' concept of andragogy. In 1970, Knowles wrote,

> Andragogy is premised on at least four crucial assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from the assumptions about child learners, on which traditional pedagogy is premised. These assumptions are that, as a person matures, (1) his self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directing human being; (2) he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that

> becomes an increasing resource for learning; (3) his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles: and (4) his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centredness to one of problem-centredness" (1970, p. 84).

The essence of self-directed learning, grounded in Knowles' (1975) theory of andragogy was the course I was specifically hired to teach *Principles of Adult Learning*. The course permitted me to intermingle New Start and Life Skills curriculum that I encountered during my initial teaching years in community based education, with my post-secondary program curriculum experience. Dewey's notion of classroom as community was also nurtured in the Principles of Adult Learning classroom, though with varied success. I observed that for some students, the shift from comparing grades and competing with their peers to collaboration and building a community of learners. As I massaged this course curriculum, I developed a sense of ownership and pride about its relationship to the students' experience in the program. The following journal excerpt captures the essence of my teacher experience and how I interpreted the theoretical literature:

> *I suggested to the students not to be surprised if they weren't self-directed learners by the completion of the course, but that perhaps by the end of the two-year program they may begin to feel more relaxed about some of Knowles' notions. (Teaching Journal, September 19, 1997)*

Knowles' assumptions have often been mistaken for the conviction that adult learners are self-directed. As adult educators are aware, and as Brundage and Mackeracher (1980) specify, there are many situations when adult learners are not self-directed. Often, when adult learners are trying something for the first time, or they are in a new setting, individuals seek the educator's direction. Knowles' assumption suggests that adults have a psychological need to move from reliance on another to self-direction.

Though the adult education literature suggests that adult learners should determine their own learning objectives, the community college teacher takes this responsibility and often draws on standards and guidelines prepared by a larger professional body. However, in the Helping Profession program, students do establish their own learning objectives for their individual practicum experience in the community. The field placement seminar, practicum and the Principles of Adult Learning subjects were intricately connected and supported the students in their understanding and design of learning objectives and a learning contract. Most of the students in my classes had no previous experience writing learning objectives. Introducing the students to learning objectives was not a one-time endeavour. For the duration of the Principles of Adult Learning course, students were introduced, through a step-by-step process, and practiced writing their learning objectives. Students were encouraged to assist one another and work closely with me. This level of responsibility was not thrust on the students without constant feedback from their learning-groups and from the teacher. The students were requested to submit their written learning objectives for weekly feedback.

Before I elaborate further, I want to mention that Knowles' notions of self-directed learning and his use of learning contracts has encountered a great deal of criticism in the adult education literature. Knowles' notions also created tensions among the faculty group with whom I worked. These criticisms were relative to each teacher's professional practical knowledge and experience of using and refining Knowles' materials. Applying Dewey's question, "What then, is the true meaning of preparation in the educational scheme?" (Dewey, 1939, p. 672), to my teaching practice in helping profession education, I turn my discussion to how I embraced Knowles' *Learning Contract.* A significant component within the Principles of Adult Learning class, one that I refer to throughout this thesis, was the student's introduction to problem solving and to designing their own learning contract.

A Story about Learning Contracts: 1997

In what was, at the time, a fourteen-week semester, I worked closely with each student in building his or her learning goals for their field placement experience. The students were encouraged to work together and embrace each other as a resource in designing their own learning contracts. For many students, this task was unfamiliar, tedious and difficult. However, it was within this tension that I believe the students' experience was, in Dewey's terms, *educative*. How I hoped the students in my class would work from the Knowles' text, *Self-directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers* is quite different from Collins' (1996) description:

> A how-to text which embraces without question an ideology of technique. It describes self-directed learning and then sets out, in formulaic terms, how it has to be done; directed self-directed-learning, so to speak. Those practitioners who sense that the text is not sufficiently formulaic will find reassurance in Knowles' most recent book, *Using Learning Contracts* (p. 111).

Perhaps for some educators and students, the text was originally included and adopted in our curriculum as a *how-to text*, but I have no memory of experiencing it in this way. I used the text as a *guide*, and as a way to encourage the students to look at how they approach their own learning. I recall a class early in the semester where I asked the students to reflect on past experiences. I asked the students to delve into their teacher memories and to recall a teacher's influence, or lack of, in their own life. I asked the students to think in terms of the teacher's helpfulness or hindrances to their own learning experience. Lengthy discussions about teaching and learning situations evolved as the students shared their stories. The students' stories, both written and told in the classroom, were far from formalistic thinking. Instead, the curriculum was alive, full of tension, and emotion.

I did not use Knowles' text as a mandatory script, nor did I draw exclusively on Knowles' conceptual and methodological approach. I found myself reaching back to my earlier teaching history to draw on a taxonomy of life skills teaching methodologies material grounded in the theoretical concepts of behavioural, psychological and cognitive frameworks (Training Research and Development Station, 1973). But it is important to say that I also never felt wedded to these taxonomies and frameworks as scripts in formalistic terms. The reader will recall the teaching stories of experience in chapter one, where I discussed the Newstart curriculum and Dewey's notions of experience.

Learning contracts, Knowles claimed, helped students be creative and efficient in designing their learning objectives, identifying learning resources, and developing their learning strategies. How learning contacts are embraced by many social work agencies in the helping profession field is replicated in Knowles' definition:

> A contract is usually defined as a "binding agreement between two or more persons or parties," and it is in fact becoming more and more common for teachers to make contracts with students for course work and grades, and for nontraditional study institutions to enter into contracts with students specifying what must be accomplished to near a particular degree. For the purpose of this learning project in self-directed learning, however, I suggest that you contract with yourself (Knowles, 1975, p. 26).

I had been introduced to using learning contracts with my students in the beginning years of my teaching journey. Some of my students were familiar with the structure of learning contracts through their involvement as a volunteer in a community-agency project, or in some cases, a recipient of a social service. Knowles' learning contract resembles Dewey's notion of the student generating his or her own hypothesis and learning puzzle. In his discussion, Knowles offers a variety of ways of going about designing a plan for learning, specifically following steps of scientific inquiry. The components of Knowles' learning contract and design of a learning plan consisted of four parts: (1). Learning Objectives, (2). Learning Resources and Strategies, (3). Evidence of Accomplishment, and (4). Criteria and Means of Validating Evidence (1975, p. 59). I introduced the learning contract to my students and encouraged them to use their personal experience in the design and evaluation of moving toward learning objectives. It is important for me to say that the learning contract is not adopted as a document or chart that is *fixed.* As a way to confirm this notion to my students, I recommended and accepted learning contracts written in pencil. I wanted them to think in terms of change as they submitted their contracts and portfolios to me in their final course assignment. I don't think I could ever sufficiently encourage my students to think in terms of change—that their learning contracts and portfolios could be added to, and altered over time. I recall having to work very hard to help my students shift their thinking from the notion of the learning contract as a final course assignment for submission, to the idea of the learning contract as a *living document.*

Even upon their submission of the learning contract, and for some, the portfolio that accompanied it at the end of the semester, the students were encouraged to think in terms of learning on a continuum. The pragmatics of this notion was that the learning contract was submitted each semester in the student's two-year program. Many of the students were surprised to realize that it was appropriate to carry over learning objectives from the previous semester to the current semester. For many of the students, the notion that they could build on their earlier thinking was a new and startling concept. I found myself modifying Knowles' learning contract for my use with my students in a number of different ways that fit with Dewey's thinking about education:

> In the first place, *it* [true meaning of education in the educational scheme] means that a person, young or old, gets out of his present experience all that there is in it for him [*sic*] at the time in which he has it [*italics added*] (Dewey in Ratner, 1939, p. 672 - 673).

Dewey suggests that if the preparation is made the "controlling end," then the inherent capacity for growth and development are sacrificed for a hypothetical future:

> The ideal of using the present simply to get ready for the future contradicts itself. It omits, and even shuts out, the very conditions by which a person can be prepared for his future. We always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future. This is the only preparation which in the long run amounts to anything (Dewey in Ratner, 1939, p. 673).

To give the present experience worthwhile meaning, Dewey notes that "attentive care" must be dedicated to the environment, event, and happenings.

Using the learning contract as a teaching and learning tool is an aspect of Collins' criticism. Collins' (1996; 1991) description:

> For Malcolm Knowles the adult educator wedded to self-directed learning, as andragogy becomes responsible for managing a pedagogic technique, usually in the form of a learning contract with a student client. Through a negotiation process, the client is expected to identify a learning project and to specify, at the outset, learning objectives, learning resources and strategies, evidence of accomplishment, and criteria for evaluation. One wonders whether Eduard Lindeman had this kind of formal reductionism in mind when he first advanced the notion of andragogy as the true method of adult learning (p. 111).

Knowles' work has been criticized because of the assumptions embedded in his work. Among some of the critiques, there seems to be a polarized notion of teacher-directed and self-directed learning. Knowles considered these criticisms and modified his thinking. Many theorists seem to ignore important component of Knowles' work and a term key to Dewey's philosophy of experience: *continuum*.

More than a teaching tool, the learning contract was used in a way that fit closely with Dewey's thinking. As well as embodying the students' personal stories and past experience, the learning contract included the continuum of subject-matter experience between the classroom and the community.

Learning Contracts and Field Placements

I embraced the *Learning Contract* as essential to the student's field placement experience. An aspect of my working relationship with students I supervised is a personal visit with them and their supervisors at the location of their community placement. If the supervisor is comfortable with the complexities of the learning contact and the student's learning goals relative to the theory of social service work and the placement, the meeting stays closely focused on the student's learning. Other times, when the supervisor is uncomfortable with the learning contract and the complexities of the student's learning and their goals, I find myself in another kind of role. I find myself entering into a gentle dance, careful not to step on anyone's toes. In cases where I feel the student's learning plan is not supported by the worker's supervisory abilities, I work more diligently with the student, meeting with the student again, usually in my office or on the telephone. If the student has accompanied me to my car after the three-way visit, it is common for us to enter into lengthy dialogue, picking up the pieces of the supervision visit over the hood of my car in the agency parking lot. Before I drive off to meet with my next student, I record all my memories of the visit into my working journal:

> *On my arrival to the agency, Katrina requested to speak with me in private and prior to the supervisor joining us. The key focus of this meeting was that Katrina wanted to terminate her placement. Earlier, Katrina had expressed her concern about her workload, and what she perceived to be a lack of supervision, as well as her uncertainty about whether she should continue with this particular placement. Upon my arrival, Katrina whispered her request to meet with me alone. I diplomatically suggested to the supervisor (who I observed seated and waiting*

with her clipboard on her knee) that she join us immediately after I speak with Katrina alone. During our private discussion and with blushed cheeks Katrina reiterated her concerns about the breadth of her responsibilities at the placement. Katrina claimed that she was not receiving enough direct supervision, and that she ultimately had concern for her health and well-being. After listening to Katrina, and considering the length of time she had been at the placement and the attempts she had made to adapt to the situation, I suggested that she choose what felt right for her. Katrina's explanation shaped my decision to take the necessary steps without my taking the extra step up of setting up a promotion committee with my colleagues and making a decision there. I have known Katrina to be a high achiever and as someone who strives for order and clarity in her life. She has a track record for working hard at everything she does, and I felt more lenient of her request than I felt about requests of a similar nature from some of my other students in the past. We spoke about the importance of closure and endings and how these can shape relationships and situations in the workplace. I suggested that if she felt that she had done all she could to make her placement workable, that she could terminate and that she needed to find another placement as quickly as possible. Katrina informed me that she had two other possibilities in mind. I encouraged her to speak openly, in my presence about her concerns to her supervisor. At

> *the same time I wondered how my colleagues would interpret my decision. (Placement Journal, November 4, 1998).*

The students were in their field placement two days a week. On their return to the classroom, I invite the individuals I visited to talk about the details of our supervision meeting. Often times, the student has reconstructed the meaning of the supervision conversation, and this too becomes part of the class discussion. Here the learning contract becomes an important communication tool. During the class session that followed our meeting, Katrina articulated to her peers the chain of events before and during the meeting she had with her supervisor and myself. As alluded to in the above journal entry, Katrina was an excellent student. Though her learning contract was not the topic of conversation during the meeting, Katrina's learning goals were implicitly central to her thinking, her decision, and the action she ended up taking, which was to leave the placement. The student's learning contract becomes pivotal to this conversation, especially if she reconstructs the meaning of her experience. Using her learning journal as a resource, Katrina can draw on her own meaning making in terms of the learning objectives she set out for herself at the onset on the semester. A student in a similar situation may find themselves formulating new learning objectives and adding to their learning contract. The narrative of the student's field placement and stories of experience about their learning goals, strategies, surprises and disappointments becomes classroom discourse.

The student's participation in their field placement experience includes, and moves beyond, their acquisition of knowledge from assigned textbook readings, which are primarily theoretical in nature. As Dewey (1938) points out, what is written in textbooks is often thought of as static and as a finished product. By formulating the philosophy of experience in the classroom practice of helping profession education, and with the use of the learning contract and the field placement experience, the student will likely discover principles common to helping profession practice without the imposition of a theoretical text. The principles of social work theory are abstract by themselves.

The learning contract has helped me work with students who approach their field placement situation with abstract notions about what they can learn. In this way the learning contract becomes a vehicle that, in Dewey's terms, is educative. Through using the learning contract, the student is allowed a vehicle in which to *tell*, *retell* and *reconstruct* (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988) their field placement experience relative to their life, and to their course work in the Helping Profession program. Essentially, the contract becomes a *place* where the student can begin to think about the integration of social service work theory and practice and their own life experience. In Dewey's (1938) terms, a *fundamental unity* between the student's experience in the field and their theoretical study through their course work is created in "an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education" (p. 20).

Often times, in classroom discussion, learning contracts, journal entries and dialogue with students and their supervisors, I hear about students' lives inside and outside of the classroom and their field placement settings. At every point on the continuum of the student's life, interaction takes place. In his introduction to *Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy,* Ratner (1939) points out that where there is interaction, there is continuity and notes this continuity takes place in various directions. These directions include movement that is lateral, cross-sectional, longitudinal and/or historical. I invite the reader to picture the students learning contract through the lens of Ratner's illustrative description of Dewey's notion of union, and interception of continuity and interaction. Ratner begins his description by saying that twelve ivory billiard balls are lined up, then struck by a wooden cue.

> The impulse is not transmitted in a one-way linear series of pushes from next to next, starting with the first ball and going down the line, this one-way linear series being followed by a similar one-way series of pushes traveling in the reverse direction. The billiard balls are made of ivory; they are not made of Newtonian atoms. The cue is made of wood and is not external to the world within which the billiard balls are. Each ivory ball is "alive," as billiard experts rightly say. And so is the cue. When the cue hits the first ball, the ball hits right back. The consequence of that unequal contest is the reaction of the first ball it crashes into the next, and so on with every ball down the line. At no point do you have cause following effect and effect following cause; at every point you have a cross weaving or interweaving of actions, and that is, interactions, and each interaction is an interweaving of cause-effect (Ratner, p. 153 - 154).

At this conjecture, I propose that the fixed notions of Collins and other opponents of the learning contract, falls short of what Ratner describes weaving and interweaving actions. To move further from these fixed notions, I again invite my reader to imagine the organic connections between the wood of the cue and the ivory billiard ball, building on Dewey's (1938) notion that there is an "organic connection between education and personal experience" (p. 25). Though I am no expert, I know intuitively that the game is a puzzle. The experience of billiards is not self-explanatory, this much I know, because I have attempted (and failed miserably) at the game. In my introduction, I learned about the intricate connections that result from the ball's response to the connection of the cue.

In the field work seminar, the learning contract (like the pool cue), which embraces the students' past experience, present practicum situation, and learning intentions for the future (the billiard balls) becomes the student's *curriculum* (connection between life and education), a term not generally used in the adult education literature. Self-directed learning, learning contracts and Knowles' suggested continuum between teacher-directed and self-directed learning, played a primary role in my teaching and learning situation. Knowles' thinking about andragogy and self-directed learning was the *subject matter* (a term that, again, is generally absent from the adult education literature) discussed in the classroom. The experiential nature of the subject matter in the classroom permitted the students to experience Knowles' conceptualization of self-directed learning. The process of the students experiencing the subject matter (e.g. learning contract, collaborative learning groups) became the classroom topic of discussion. Accordingly, the classroom process became the curriculum's subject matter. The following journal excerpt captures the classroom curriculum:

> *Each class session began with one of Brundage and Mackeracher's proposed principles of adult learning. Discussion about these principles usually got the students talking, often debating, about the roles and responsibilities of teachers and students. (Teaching Journal, 1988).*

For my purposes, Brundage and Mackeracher's (1980) principles of adult learning seemed seamless in terms of the Helping Profession program. I felt no surprise when I learned many years later, that Brundage was a social worker, because the principles that he and Mackeracher wrote about closely mirrored the principles and ethics of social work practice.

Building on Knowles' (1975) later work, I accept the notion that the students in my class, who came from all over the world and all walks of life, were on a continuum between being teacher-directed to becoming self-directed in their learning. I was careful not to misinterpret Knowles' meaning of self-directed, nor did I embrace the formalistic notions implicit in his assumptions. Self-directed learning is often confused with the notion that the student will work in isolation. I felt clear about my students (and myself) working in community. As I mentioned in chapter one, I adopted the Deweyian perspective (1938) that the school is a form of community life.

Living On-line with PAL in 1999

In the 1999-fall semester, enrolling in an intensive on-line curriculum development program, (administered by the college), one faculty member named Cynthia, was granted release time to re-develop Principles of Adult Learning (PAL) into a computerized on-line format. One year later, in the 2000 fall semester, this same faculty member implemented and delivered the on-line curriculum to students in the Gerontology program. At the same time, another change was afoot – two previously separate programs (Helping Profession and Gerontology programs), were in the process of merging toward a shared curriculum. In a temporal period of one-year and after considerable debate and deliberation, in 2001, faculty members from the two programs settled on a shared common curriculum. Since the Gerontology faculty-group sustained the subject matter of Principles of Adult Learning (PAL) in their program's curriculum, and with the two programs merging, it was expected that PAL would be included in the shared curriculum. This expectation was reflected in the 2001/2002-college calendar, and the description of Principles of Adult Learning was altered to indicate specific topic areas and on-line delivery:

> This subject introduces students to the theory and practice and value of self-directed learning. Classroom discussion, online discussion and group work will focus on learning styles, motivation, priority and stress management, study skills and the development of critical thinking skills. Students will work through course material totally online and will attend lecture and group work in class.

However, soon after this development, Cynthia, the faculty member who re-developed and implemented PAL using on-line delivery, relocated to teach in another area of the college. In view of the financial investment into Cynthia's exposure to on-line curriculum-development (and complying with the college's endorsement of on-line programs), the department chair was displeased about this move, however, firm about sustaining PAL as the on-line subject in the program's curriculum. Nonetheless, from my conversation with another faculty member, I learned that subsequent to the spring deadline for the 2001/2002-college calendar, and the administrator's firm words, the faculty members endured "a great deal of debate," and decided to exclude PAL from the 2001 semester.

The faculty-group's decision not to conform to the college's endorsement of an on-line subject and the calendar's inclusion of PAL as a required subject, prompted me to rethink my story about curriculum deliberation in 1995. In my earlier reconstruction, I overlooked the life narratives of the people who participated in the 1995 curriculum meeting event.

Another Look at the 1995 Meeting

Of the ten people at the meeting, five were teachers from the continuing education, part-time program, and four people from the full-time program attended. All of the individuals in the continuing education department, except the administrator, had experience teaching PAL. Only one full-time teacher (me) experienced PAL first hand. The full-time faculty was under-represented because two individuals elected not to attend the curriculum meeting. The meeting's chair was also very familiar with this particular area of adult education theory and practice, and had used self-directed principles in the classroom. Also, the continuing education administrator was accustomed to older students and quite familiar with the program's curriculum. On the other hand, the full-time administrator was newer to the program and less informed about the program's curriculum. As well, the full-time administrator was deeply involved in the process of completing an arduous and intense curriculum review with another college program.

The stories told so far in this chapter embrace patterns, rhythms and a specific temporal period in my teaching life. These stories are complex and full of tension. The stories that I have told, and the one that I tell next, are community college stories that hold the plot line of the theory/practice tension.

Part III

Thorndike, Bloom and College Curriculum

In the community college that I have been referring to, it became policy to move from designing subject outlines with goals and objectives to subject outlines that are written from an outcome curriculum-based perspective. At the onset of this movement, college faculty members were invited to voluntarily participate in professional development sessions. Thorndike's approach is presently used in the college, and subject and course outlines are based on Bloom's Taxonomy of educational objectives that are "built on observable, classifiable behaviors" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 22). The status and wide acceptance of the Taxonomy is highlighted in the 1994 National Society for the Study of Education Yearbook's preface:

> Arguably, one of the most influential educational monographs of the past half century is the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, *The Classification of Educational Goals, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*. Nearly forty years later after its publication in 1956 the volume remains a standard reference for discussions of testing and evaluation, curriculum development, and teaching and teacher education.... At a recent meeting of approximately two hundred administrators and teachers, the senior editor of this volume asked for a show of hands in response to the question, "How many of you have heard of Bloom's Taxonomy?" Virtually every hand in the audience was raised. ....." (Anderson and Sosniak, 1994, p. vii, in Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 22).

Thorndike, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) point out, "was a measurement-oriented psychologist who popularized the idea of a science of education based on the observation and numerical representation of behavior" (p. 22). Clandinin and Connelly found that Bloom's Taxonomy is used widely in pre-service teacher education textbooks and general curriculum. Thinking back to 1994 and the curriculum course I took specific to adult education, I recall the assignment that I approached using the semester's teachings, which was Bloom's Taxonomy. For my paper, I designed a curriculum plan for a family course that I hoped to be teaching the following semester. For the actual curriculum design, I forecasted the demographics of my potential students. I imagined the classroom and speculated on student numbers. Considering its co-requisites and the pre-requisites, I indicated how the course fit into the rest of the program curriculum. I thought about my own skills and knowledge in classroom practice. I considered the larger social world and what was happening in the changing Canadian definition of the family, for example, same-sex couples and blended families. I wanted the course to be experimental and I knew that I wanted to incorporate student presentations and group work.

I held in mind an earlier experience from the previous semester. I had chosen a textbook and a series of articles that did not seem to touch the student's experience. I had naively introduced the students, who were mostly women, to feminist thinking. I realized that my introduction to feminist thinking was premature and could actually have been a course in itself. For many of the students, *feminism* had not been embraced into their vocabulary, their thinking, or their lives.

I also heard the echoes of students who had taken the course with a colleague who used Margrit Eichler's *The Canadian Family Today*. After becoming familiar with the challenging nature of the text myself, I realized that my colleague's use of this book was actually quite deceptive. At the time, I was not aware of the level of difficulty most of the students were having with the reading level of Eichler's text. In one respect I followed my colleague's example and chose a Canadian text, but not Eichler, nor the text that I experimented with the previous semester. This text, written by Mandell and Duffy, and published through York University, took a feminist perspective. I knew that I had to find a text that was closer to my notion of the students and how I imagined their life experience. I also had to choose a text of the appropriate reading level. I eventually came across another Canadian family text written by Maureen Baker, which I was drawn to because it included a glossary, chapter summaries and study questions.

On completing the assignment (and after the course outline was approved by the program chair), I felt ready to teach the course. What happened next was unfortunate. I learned that the Baker text had also been used in some of the students' OAC (Ontario Academic Curriculum) programs. After our initial class introductions, a number of those students visited my office seeking an *Advanced Standing*. I argued that the nature of a second-semester college-level course specific to helping profession education would be a different experience from their encounter in the OAC Family course. In my mind, the biggest obstacle to my argument was that the course outline was written in an outcome-based format. The students claimed they had already achieved the outcomes, and therefore *experienced* the experience. Ultimately, since the students were measured by learning-outcomes – outcomes they had achieved in the OAC high school course – this group of students won advanced standing and did not have to participate in the course.

For some students, not taking this course meant a longer lunch break; for others it meant additional part-time working hours. For me, it meant fewer students and a more reasonable class size. However, I felt disappointed in myself for having overlooked the possibility of the secondary school use of the same text. I was also displeased that the students opted out of a course experience that was directly related to their future work as a helping professional in the field.

For my assignment, I worked through the Taxonomy, which is "composed of six levels of cognitive behaviours - *knowledge*, *comprehension*, *application*, *analysis*, *synthesis*, and *evaluation* (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 23). I used Bloom's Taxonomy as a tool to help me think through my approach to the subject material. Without knowing the actual make up of the student group, I could only image my audience. To choose among the six levels of cognitive behavior as outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy I had no choice but to guess at the students' level of understanding and their cognitive strengths.

As pointed out by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) in their explanation of reviewing Bloom's Taxonomy with a team of individuals, "context makes the difference" (p. 26). In their discussion about narrative to the non-narrative thinking members of the Taxonomy team, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) introduced the metaphor of a lathe as a tool.

> The lathe gave us the possibility to illustrate the notion that a tool could be used by different people, at different times, in different contexts, all fundamentally narrative notions.... Furthermore, the context in which the lathe and shop exist makes a great deal of difference to how it is viewed and used. The reasoning behind the placement of a lathe in a school setting will differ in an isolated aboriginal community compared to a wealthy suburban area or an inner-city setting. Not only will the reasons differ in these different community contexts but the kinds of children will differ, the teachers will differ, and the things made on the lathe will differ (2000, p. 26).

Context was not taken into account for the students permitted to drop the family course from their Helping Profession program. Since I was not thinking narratively at this point in my teaching journey, I did not think to point out five key features of a student's curriculum experience. These features are *temporality, people, action, certainty,* and *context*. Clandinin and Connelly place temporality as a central feature in thinking narratively, stating "We take for granted that locating things in time is the way to think about them" (p. 29). Clandinin and Connelly suggest that the notion of *time* is removed from the Taxonomy. I see that for the students who dropped the family course, to a limited extent their past was considered, but the students' present or future lives was not taken into account. Had I been thinking narratively, I could have argued from a narrative perspective, that is, the student's past, present and future. I could have spoken to the students about reconstructing their past experience to shape their future lives. I may have been able to help them, and the administrator, to understand that their past stories about family could be told, and retold to bring about new meaning. I could have drawn on Dewey's (1938) notion of education as the reconstruction of experience. For the students to drop the course, the administrator did not see the students as having a narrative history. The temporal dimension of the past, present and future was not considered; instead the student was seen as existing in one-dimension only.

Another narrative feature not considered in the adoption of the taxonomy and outcome-based curriculum grand narrative is *people*. People's lives are in a process of constant change. To assume that students in an OAC course think alike, and have the same perspectives on subject matter one or two years later, is to ignore both temporality and life on a continuum. Outcome-based curriculum and curriculum that was taxonomy driven is constructed with "people-free notions" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 30).

Another feature not considered in my pre-narrative thinking is *action*. That a number of students wanted to streamline their social services community college education, I now take as a *narrative sign*. College deadlines for dropping courses loom over both students' and teachers' heads, and hasty decisions get made at the chaotic onset of semesters when there is little opportunity for teachers to get to know the students who want to drop courses. From the perspective of outcome-based learning objectives and Blooms' taxonomy, the student dropping the course and obtaining an advanced standing is a direct measurement of the student's past achievement. As Clandinin and Connelly state, "There is an equation connecting action and meaning, connecting performance and cognitive level" (p. 31). Without thinking narratively, the students' life histories are discounted. With no further understanding of the student's action, that is, their request to drop the course, and the meaning behind their request, remains unknown. For students in a Helping Profession program preparing to enter the larger community (and social context) to work either with individuals and/or their families, not to participate in the family course is a worrisome narrative sign.

The fourth feature key to narrative thinking is *certainty*. As stated by Clandinin and Connelly (2000):

> There is a sense of tentativeness, usually expressed as a kind of uncertainty, about an event's meaning. ... The attitude in a narrative perspective is one of doing "one's best" under the circumstance, knowing all the while that other possibilities, other interpretations, other ways of explaining things are possible (p. 31).

If I were asked to give a categorical answer to the question, what do you think community college students want of their experience?, I would give a one word answer. Certainty. I wonder if the students who requested an advanced standing for the family course had a sense of certainty about their understanding of family as subject matter. Had the students a sense of tentativeness or wonder about family, perhaps they would have chosen to remain in the course with their peers. I wonder if the students left their OAC Family course with a sense of certainty and with the idea that there were no other interpretations to be explored about family as subject matter. In retrospect, I feel further disappointment for those who did not further their interpretations.

The final feature of narrative thinking, and one already discussed, is *context*. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain, context is inescapable and encompasses "temporal context, spatial context, and context of other people" (p. 32). Dewey's (1938) notion of *situation* and *experience* makes it possible to imagine the teacher not so much as a *maker of curriculum* but as *part of it* (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988).

Theory: Foreground or Background?

In her argument, Cranton (1989) pauses to add, "... theory is simply an explanation of facts or observations and the relationships among these facts or observations." She points out that most theories are developed slowly over many years "and even then, serious pitfalls can be encountered" (p. 5). Not dissimilar to Schwab's (1971) notion of the usefulness of theories, Cranton notes that "theories provide us with a way of summarizing, explaining, and understanding the multitude of complex behaviours we may observe." Cranton states, "for the practitioner the theory provides guidelines for effective practice." Theories, Cranton continues, allow us to make precautions, adding, "clear-cut theory-based guidelines are not available for instructors" (p. 5). However, Cranton maintains that the practitioner of adult education can use and build on the results of theoreticians and researchers.

For me, the adult education theory was stabilizing. I felt on solid ground with the theory. But there has been a shift and now I feel as though I am *adrift* and *unearthed.* Continuing our thesis/supervision conversation, Michael Connelly said, "Most often, we hear people talking about the theoretician who is disconnected from the world of practice. The theoretician sees their world as stable and the practice world as being adrift."

"Not me," I told him, "I experienced it the other way around."

In my reconstruction, a conversation with my OISE colleague Vicki Fenton came to mind. She told me how she sometimes responds to the theoretical literature in math education. I sensed Vicki feels adrift from the theory and grounded in her classroom teaching experience. Vicki's voice echoed my supervisor's thinking. Vicki and I briefly discussed the nature of the impact of grand theoretical literature on the practical world of teaching. I could hear the sense of heaviness in Vicki's statement, "The literature is very powerful." The power of the literature was a force she fought, and earlier, one I embraced.

Questions that I believe key to my thinking about my autobiographical journey and this thesis inquiry revealed themselves during my meeting with Michael Connelly. Who is on stable ground? Is it the practitioner? Or the theoretician? I felt as though my thinking and way of being in the classroom had been disrupted. The question resonated with my notion of who I think I have become as a teacher. I felt as though the stories I told about my first ten years of experience in my teaching narrative exposed something very important. How is it that I continue to draw on and write about teaching stories of experience that are embedded in a teacher identity that seems to be unravelling?

The Ground is Shifting

I did not feel separate from the theory. Instead, as my stories reveal, I applied it. The theory was my ground. I used the theoretical underpinnings of Knowles, Brundage and Mackeracher as a guide. I continued to draw on my early teaching community based education experience from across the border and boundary of post-secondary education.

For many years, Brundage and Mackeracher's work fit my experience in the community college classroom. Their grand narrative fit with how I had come to be with my students. In my narrative analysis of these teaching stories of experience, I raise the following questions: What shifted? How is it that what was working in the classroom no longer works? My more recent experiences in teaching and classroom practice tell me that something as definitely shifted. However, the *contents* of the dog-eared, soft cover purple-bound book (Brundage and Mackeracher, 1980) that sits on my shelf remains the same. The words on the page have not shifted. Yet I am drawn to them, as were the professors in the Bachelor of Education in Adult Education program in which I was enrolled as recently as 1996. Who shifts the ground? The practitioner or the theoretician?

It has not been difficult to notice the heightened pace of the shifts within the world we live in and the formal institutional learning landscapes. Within these changes in the world and our learning institutions, where does the community college teacher position him/herself in terms of the accepted notions and principles within the grand narrative of the theoretical literature? What's ground and what's background? Sometimes you see ground. Sometimes you see background. For the theoretician the ground is the theory, and the background is adrift. During our meeting we discussed this notion in respect to the picture of the Old and Young woman. (Figure 1).

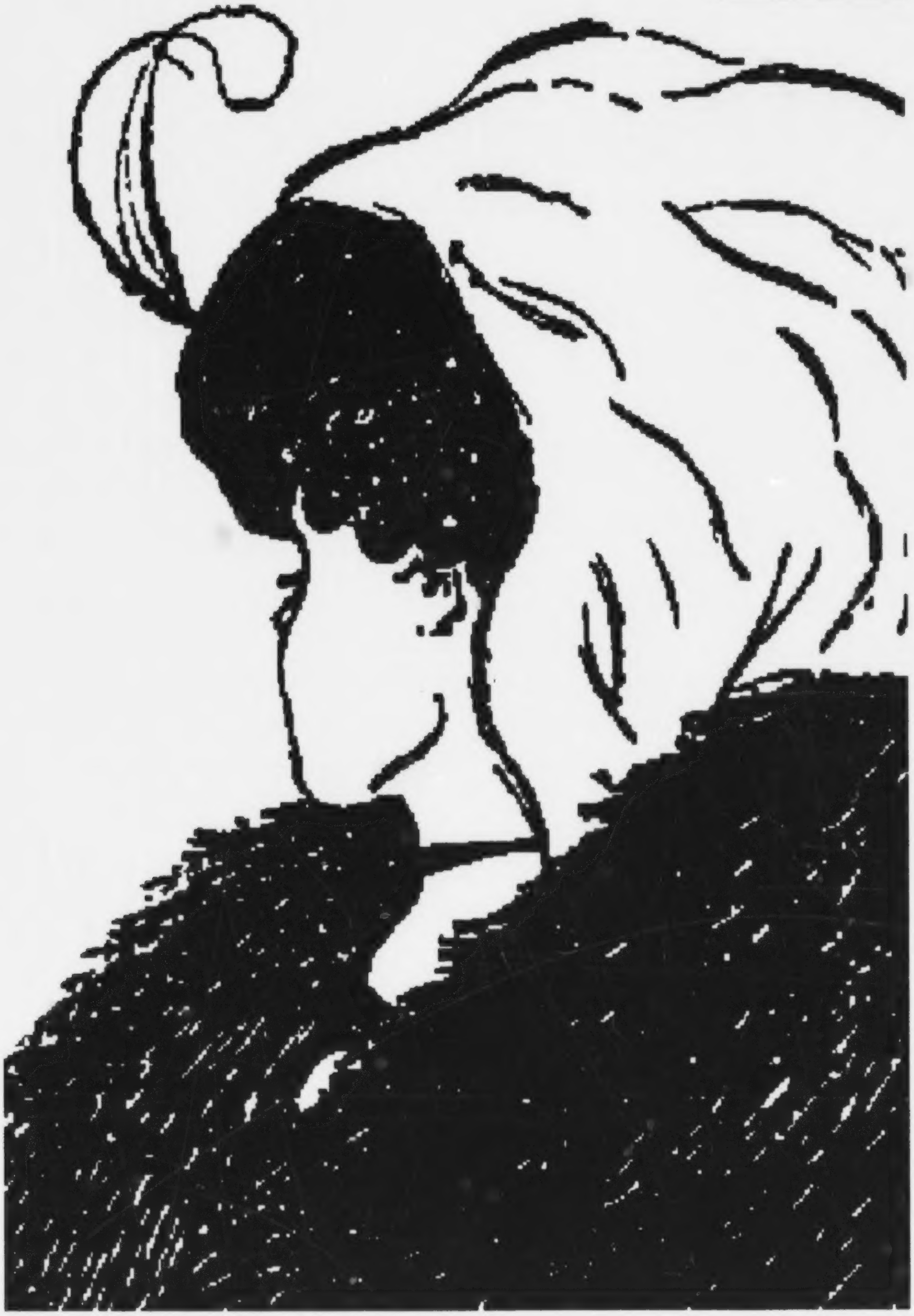

Figure 1.

While there is agreement that Knowles' ideas are critical to the field of adult education, Brookfield, Collins and others are critical of Knowles' work, suggesting that his work on andragogy is not a proven theory and that a contrast between andragogy and pedagogy is difficult to maintain. I am wondering about the need for a contrast between andragogy and pedagogy in the community college classroom.

Picturing the classic picture of the old and young woman often used in psychology text books and communication training seminars, it is difficult to agree on which woman is in the foreground and which woman is in the background. For some individuals, after looking at the picture for a period of time it is sometimes possible to see both women simultaneously. However, for others, even after a lengthy period of time looking at the picture, they can not differentiate between the features of the young and old woman in the same picture. Others may differentiate, but are convinced, based on their own perception that one of the two women is in the background and the other is in the foreground. In my classroom situations, I have had several students in my class tell me that the predominate figure in the picture is the old woman, while other students in the same class were convinced that the young woman was the figure who takes precedence. Thinking of this example in terms of schisms, the tearing apart of one picture into competing bodies of opinions, I am struck that the same phenomena persists in theory making.

Chapter Summary

Through this autobiographical/narrative thesis, I have uncovered an advancing and visceral story about a teacher who comes to encounter discomfort on two different landscapes. The stories in my thesis encompass a teacher's experience of feeling out-of-sorts on the community college landscape and out-of-bounds in the adult education literature. In the first two chapters of my thesis, I wrote about tensions rooted in the experience of crossing philosophical borders and physical boundaries, when I shifted to post-secondary education from a community based teaching situation in the community college system. I discussed my earlier teaching experiences and how I initially and confidently embraced adult education thinking into my Helping Profession classroom practice. I have written about adult education as a phenomenon and as a past way of being with students at an earlier time on a community college landscape. I show the reader how some of the grand theoretical adult education narratives (e.g. Brundage and Mackeracher, Knowles, Brookfield and Cranton), shape teaching practice in formal learning situations. My narrative inquiry reveals a dissolving relationship between adult education theory to community college life experience.

I have approached the literature and my response to it as a puzzle. I have attempted to sort out the pieces of the grand theoretical literature as written in the encyclopedias and handbooks. Sorting through the literature felt similar to my approach to rainy days at the cottage when I moved the pre-formed puzzle pieces around on a large surface, pursing a concrete image. Thinking about my response to the literature, through the lens of my own concrete experience from a community college perspective, has revealed the abstract nature of the adult education literature. I wrote about "being in" the literature as a difficult process – brushing up against who I am, and what I do, as a community college teacher. I pointed to my isolation on the community college landscape, and the alienation I felt while reviewing the literature, finding, for the most part, adult education theoretical discourse does not embrace community college experience.

It is my hope that I have shown my reader, the points of tension as I lived them in seeking the balance between the theory, student, teacher and classroom situations, and curriculum as lived on the community college terrain. One point of tension that I write about is the learning contract. I oppose Colin's notion that Knowles' learning contract is reductionist and formalistic thinking. My response to Colin's contention is presented as a phantom argument, and as a way to express what I believe would be relinquished in a curriculum's response to individual student narratives. By providing the particulars of two faculty-planning meetings, I describe curriculum deliberations and changes to subject matter that created dramatic shifts to a Helping Profession program. Through my narrative reconstruction, I uncovered colliding narratives of experience among the teachers in the full-time and continuing education Helping Profession programs. Through further reflection, I discover that my teacher thinking, and how I strive to be with community college students, was more in-tune with the deliberation process of the part-time/continuing education teachers.

Revealed in chapter four, are *borderlands* as a metaphorical place between two separate worlds on a community college landscape and on the continuum of my own experience in the college system. I have had an awakening that the term *borderland,* (also defined further in chapter five), is actually part of a narrative pattern that brings meaning to my teacher identity. My professional practical knowledge, embedded in my earlier acceptance of adult education principles, is positioned in a metaphorical place to which, I often return.

Using personal experience methods and narrative inquiry to examine the community college landscape and delve into the adult education literature, created new tensions for me. Through thinking narratively, my teacher identity – someone whose professional practical knowledge is grounded in stories of adult education theoretical principles and practice – unravels. My experience of "being in" the adult education theoretical literature narratively, coincides with Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) discussion about the tensions at the boundary between narrative inquiry and formalistic inquiry. As I narratively examined temporal relationships among people, places and events on college territory – against the backdrop of adult education theory – I did not detect my professional experience or the experiences and voices of teachers and students in the adult education literature.

By *thinking* narratively, I have begun to show new ways of approaching the adult education theoretical literature and its relationship to experience on the community college landscape. In addition, since beginning my thesis journey and declaring my interchangeable use of the terms student/learner and educator/teacher, the nomenclature of my thesis has shifted. As I think further about community college life, and embracing Dewey's thoughts on education and Connelly and Clandinin's conception of curriculum, I have chosen to use the terms *student*, *teacher* and *curriculum* within the confines of my thesis to talk further individuals who teach and learn on the community college landscape.

In chapter four, I pointed to criticisms of andragogy, self-directed learning and the learning contract. Like many other adult education theorists, adult education researchers do not consider teacher/student curriculum, or how individuals are approaching and engaging in the subject matter. Life experience in the classroom – the kind of work that I am undertaking in my thesis research – is not examined in Brookfield's or Collins' reproach. On Dewey's (1938) continuum of educational experience, all learning becomes a part of the discourse. As part of an important movement, I am suggesting that continual transformation and on-going critique of adult education be embraced beyond the great divides of categories and distinctions, and be thought about in terms of students' and teachers' continuum of life experience.

The stories of experience, revealed in chapter four, indicate changing students and teachers moving in-and-out of community college programs. Within these changes, the story of how adult education theoretical concepts are embraced by individuals, on the landscape, shifts. These landscape transitions shape relationships among people, subject matter and milieu. My teacher stories reveal shifting relationships. Relationships among teachers and teachers and their students are patterned by the relationship between the displacement of adult education discourse and community college life. Professional identity of the community college teacher is also reconstructed.

My particular story of community college practice, curriculum deliberation and a program's earlier adoption of adult education's theoretical concepts, exposes a growing disconnection between adult education discourse and also gives evidence to teacher narratives that are overlapping and others that are in-collision. Chapter four shows that teacher narratives matter. How teachers draw on their prior teacher knowledge and life experience is important. If community college teachers are to draw on adult education discourse to guide their practice, the curriculum, in terms of the voices and classroom life experiences of students and their teachers, must be acknowledged and understood in the literature.

For people on the community college landscape, it is also time to consider alternative ways of thinking about adult education theory and its relationship to practice in the community college. However, it is now time to bring the thinking together, to delve more deeply into understanding the connections between adult education theory and the lives of the people who live on the community college landscape.

The naturalness of the borderlands emerges, when I am with like-minded teachers who embrace their students as individuals who are (becoming) adults and pursue classroom life to reflect learning communities. People who I meet in the borderlands, have sometimes worked in community based situations, graduated from Adult Education university-programs or participated in informal and non-formal adult education community learning. However, the assurance felt in the borderlands, is outside the open ground of the community college landscape.

In the next chapter, *Using Narrative Inquiry to Find Open Ground*, I continue to embrace the terms borderlands, border and boundary. I extend my metaphorical use of these terms to talk about using narrative inquiry as a researcher and a teacher in the 1998 classroom situation under study. Following a brief summary of earlier chapters in my thesis, my reader is introduced to how I use narrative inquiry to study everyday-life activity in a community college classroom over the duration of one-semester.

Chapter Five

Using Narrative Inquiry to Find Open Ground

Introduction

I believe, after delving into my own personal narrative, that one of the budding influences for this narrative inquiry into the construction of a post-secondary teacher identity, was the transition I made from community based teaching and learning to post-secondary education in the community college system. Within this transition, I experienced – to my surprise – vast variances among faculty, students, curriculum, and the milieus. It is within this philosophical border and physical boundary crossing that much of the dissonance I talk about has its roots.

A simple reading of the dictionary (Webster, 1983) elicits two basic definitions of the words border and boundary. Both words refer to limits that are clearly defined. While the dictionary definitions convey certainty, such clear-cut definitions become problematic in narrative research. How I embrace the terms *border* and *boundaries* in this thesis is embedded in my research stories of experience as a teacher in community based and post-secondary education. My research story presents an ambiguity and a sense of going beyond the confines of research methodologies that do not lend themselves to fluid inquiries. Fluid inquiries are characterized by thinking that is not constrained by theories, and methodological approaches and procedures (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

Narrative Awakenings

My stories about teaching told so far, unveil that after a series of adjustments to new beginnings and then feeling more at home in post-secondary education, some of my initial reactions to the variances between the two experiences subsided. I came to find ways to bring some of the philosophical and physical amenities embedded in my community based teaching experience into my work with students in the post-secondary classroom. This temporal period of moving from one division of the college to another again brings to mind Anzaldùa's (1987) *Borderlands: La Frontera: A New Mestiza.*

Discussing the actual physical borderland of the state of Texas and southwest Mexico border, Anzaldùa defines borderlands as:

> Physically present when two or more cultures edge each other, where people from different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy. (Preface).

While living the everyday experience of the post-secondary classroom, adjusting and responding to shifts in policy and administrative structures, I was less able to identify the plot of my community college teaching life than I am now as a narrative researcher. Through my narrative understanding of the transitions in my own teaching journey, I can delve into past experiences to reconstruct meaning and new stories of experience for the future.

While living as a teacher in community based education within the larger institutional construct of the community college, the sense that I was on the other side of the border from post-secondary education was paramount. My colleagues and I lived outside the constraints of master timetables and imposed curriculum, which mostly felt like a good thing. On the other hand, often times our teaching lives seemed unrealized in memos and documents forthcoming from senior administration. (For example, professional development for faculty was arranged while we were still teaching our classes.) When walking back and forth on the picket line, during the 1984 teacher strike. I recall my sense of displacement. While we were still working with small groups of students in intimate classroom spaces, teacher conversations and stories about post-secondary students and teacher workload restrictions seemed outside our stories of experience, despite our being adult educators on the same community college landscape.

When I crossed the border into post-secondary education, I felt as though I also crossed a philosophical boundary. The meaning of my teaching experience became blurred as I entered a place on the community college landscape where my previous teacher experience often conflicted with life in the post-secondary sector of the college. Questions about my teacher identity erupted. My thesis inquiry into a narrative understanding of the lives lived on the community college landscape was augmented to include the puzzle about classroom life, changing students and the shaping of teacher identity.

Through my micro study of the 1998 group work classroom, that I introduce here and present more thoroughly in chapter six, I am trying to understand the origin of the students' attitudes toward their personal life and academic experience. I seek to understand the students' thinking about their community college educational experience. I hope to fathom how students value group learning. As noted by Darkenwald (1989), almost all organized adult learning occurs in groups. With receding teaching hours, shorter semesters and larger class sizes, it is conceivable that community college educators will maintain this ethos about the acceptance of group work in the curriculum. As teachers engage students in various group formats as a way to convey program content, problem solving and topic clarification, it is important to understand how students embrace group-work in their learning. Before engaging in this discussion, I explain how I embraced journals, field notes and student narrative papers as primary field texts that inform my inquiry into a community college classroom semester situation.

How I Delve into My 1998 Classroom Story

In this thesis, I use narrative inquiry and personal experience methods (Connelly and Clandinin, 1994) to explore experiences in adult learning at a community college. I use the terms *rhythm, patterns* and *unity*, following Clandinin and Connelly's (1994) personal experience research methods using stories of experience in narrative inquiry: Throughout my thesis,

> Stories, of course, are neither seen nor told when some one part of life is focused upon in isolation from other parts. When this happens we analyze and learn about the parts. But the unities, continuities, and rhythms in the whole are not seen. Rhythm and unity or, rather, rhythms and unities, tend to mark our narratives. .... Low points in life are followed by high ones and the tension, and movement between the two create for us a sense of rhythm and directions given by the unities that run through our lives (Clandinin and Connelly, 1986, p. 377).

By revealing narrative unities, patterns and rhythms in community college teaching, I attempt to study and better understand the community college classroom and my place in it. Embracing teaching and learning in the community college experience, I am concerned about teacher identity in community college education, and, following Dewey (1938) I am interested and concerned about the study of education at the level of experience. I am as interested in mundane classroom situations as I am in the tensions that play out in classrooms and in the lives of the students and teachers who live and work on that landscape. Narrative questions about adult education and the theoretical literature are raised in the context of the classroom and a changing social landscape. Minding Brookfield's (1994) suggestion for a shift to a more "socially embedded and socially constructed phenomenon" away from the almost exclusive dependence on psychological resources in adult education literature, I am using narrative inquiry to study the experience of a community college classroom and the shaping of teacher identity.

Through this thesis, I share the connections I make between my past life experiences and how their reconstruction brings meaning making and knowledge to teaching and learning on the community college landscape. I write both narratively and autobiographically. I share personal life transformations in terms of personal awakenings and how these experiences interact with the dialectic role of an educator and a researcher. I have told stories of identity about how I have grown as an educator, researcher and as a person learning from my participants and my students. My own perplexities about *who I am*, and *who I think I have become* as an adult educator draw me to this inquiry. The heart of this inquiry is about a teacher identity grounded in the certainty of feminist, adult learning, and social work principles that have sometimes unravelled into self-doubt and uncertainty.

In the following section I begin to discuss how I took narrative inquiry research methods into the community college classroom where I was also the teacher. This story continues to unfold in chapters six, seven and eight. Excerpts from the subject description and assignments from the subject outline are threaded throughout my discussion. (For full reference to the subject outline, see Appendix B.)

Becoming a Narrative Researcher in a Community College Classroom

As teacher and narrative researcher, I entered into the life of the classroom and into my participants' stories of experience. With narrative research, the borders and boundaries within a classroom story are uncovered by delving below the surface and into what sometimes appears to be mundane and ordinary. During the period of January 13 to April 11, 1998, I taught a subject designed to assist students in learning how to establish and maintain learning communities with their future clients in a social service community context. As described in the college calendar, this subject:

> Provides students with the knowledge, skills, and values for social work practice within communities. This includes working with oppressed and marginalized populations. This subject develops further the group theory subject taken in semester two, with an emphasis on developing leadership skills, helping within different types of groups, and using groups in community change.

During this same period – January 13 to April 11, 198, I was also teaching three different classes, one field seminar class and two sections of students in advanced group work. I kept journals on each of these classroom experiences. To maintain anonymity, the actual course name is not disclosed. The classroom experience that drew most of my attention and the one that I wrote most about in my research journal, is my Division B classroom. As my classroom story unfolds, a challenging teaching experience is unveiled.

Entering the Classroom as Teacher and Researcher

Classroom Space

The classroom was bright with lots of windows that overlooked the main artery of town. The remaining wall space was covered with chalkboards. I used a classroom that was predominately used for the nursing program. The wall space was lined with a lab table and a cluster of four hospital beds along another wall. Reflecting back, there was the sense that the learning space was encased within a border created by the furniture stored in the classroom. Depending on what I was wearing, I sometimes crawled over the beds to get to the front of the classroom. With students arriving late or leaving early (a common occurrence), a sense of commotion was created with other students having to get up from their seats, pulling in chairs and shifting bags and purses so that people could get by. At the same time, I was thankful I wasn't in the classroom I had in a previous semester; the supporting pillar standing just east of centre in the floor space. In that class, I frequently encouraged one small group of students who often sat together to come out from behind the pillar, though it was challenging because the room did not easily accommodate forty-one students if people didn't sit behind the pillar.

Advanced Group Work Class, Session One: January 15 / 16, 1998

On return to the classroom from my one-year sabbatical, and on completion of my thesis proposal and ethical review, I entered a classroom where I planned to do my research with a group of students – students with whom I was expecting to build relationship over the semester. I felt assured about the practical application of narrative inquiry and the steps set out in my proposal for the members of my committee and my research plan. A journal written prior to my return to the classroom reveals this confidence.

> *Parallel to my thesis work is the teaching assignment for next semester. I will be teaching two sections of fourth semester students in a course focusing on group work and community development. I will journal my teaching experience and keep field notes on class sessions. Videotaping will be used randomly, both as a teaching and research tool. I have completed the necessary Ethical Release forms as prescribed by the college, and I am waiting for a response from the panel. I will build a profile / composite of the student audience as stories of experience unfold throughout the semester. These stories may be fictionalized. (December 6, 1997, Journal G, p. 103).*

Prior to my classroom return, I spoke to my administrator and one of my colleagues about the students and how the semester and the move to the new campus had transpired. I heard from my colleague that "these are a really good group of students," and I was feeling quite enthusiastic about working with them in the group course and including this experience in my thesis research. On the first day of the semester, I suggested that the students and I get to know one another. I put out the idea that we could begin with introductions, and where the students were placed last year and where their field placement would be for this semester. I was also interested in knowing where they were travelling from to get to school. I wanted to get a beginning sense of knowing the students.

Following their introductions to one another, I introduced myself as a long-time teacher and as someone who had chosen to return to school. I told the students that I was writing a thesis, and through it I was seeking to understand, at a deeper level, community college experience. I shared some of my questions and what I was puzzled about. I briefly explained the carefulness of the college's extensive ethical consent procedure, telling the students that my plans for this thesis research was submitted and endorsed by the College Ethics Committee. Also during the first class, I explained that when the semester was over I might call on two or three students to be co-participants in my research. I invited the students to ask questions, at any time, either privately or in the class.

Back in the group work classroom, I encountered what I consider a border crossing. Among the business of the first class I told the students that I was also a student, thinking this shared characteristic would generate rapport and a sense of compatibility. I explained to the students that their assignments in this class embraced writing a narrative paper and personal writing. I also told the students that I was also using personal writing and narrative inquiry in my thesis research. My message was embedded in my earlier experience teaching in community based life skills programs, where educators didn't ask students to do anything that they wouldn't do themselves. In my journal I wrote:

> *I thought it was perfect. Their narrative papers were about group work, and in their journals they were reflecting on themselves because they were the group. This is why I wanted to have them keep a journal. Their journals would inform their narrative paper which was the final assignment for the course work. (Journal I Entry January 18, 1998)*

Assignments

1. Learning Journal

> Students are encouraged to maintain a learning journal in this subject. The journal will not be graded or evaluated. Students will use the journal to chronicle and reflect on their community learning experience in this subject. Students are encouraged to draw on their learning journal to complete the narrative assignment.
>
> Write "stories" of experience in your journal. The "story" involves you, the learner, in an adult learning community. Your journal should be an ongoing account of your actions and thoughts about those actions in this adult learning community. Use your journal to keep an ongoing record of group activities, and reflections on those activities. Keep the journal consistently through the life of the learning community.
>
> Be descriptive of your actions, and the actions of other members. "Write as much as you can in your journal" (C & C, 1988). Record the reactions that you have while in the group, and after you are away from the group process. Record the feelings you have about your experiences. As you react emotionally and ethically to the group process, be mindful of the past experiences and memories. Focus your journal on the experience of being a student in an adult learning community learning about group work.

Reading aloud, as the students read along from the their course outlines, I continued with the narrative assignment:

> A Personal Narrative: Adult Learning Community Due: April 16
> 45% of your grade
>
> I am asking you to apply *narrative*, in Connelly and Clandinin's terms, to study your experience of learning about group work in an adult learning community.
>
> I believe that there is no better way to study group work than to study our own process, and to study ourselves. When we understand the difficulties in group work based on our 'first hand experience,' we will be in a better position to understand how our clients think and feel.
>
> Narrative,

"Is designed to be thought of as an overall life study. A narrative understanding of who we are and what we know, is a study or our whole life"(Connelly and Clandinin, 1988).

Students will write a narrative of their own experience of learning about group work, in this specific adult learning community. By preparing a narrative, the student is encouraged to think of their 12-session learning process, as one, or, as a whole.

A narrative is kind of a life story, larger and more sweeping than the short stories that compose it. By endlessly telling and re-telling stories about your experience in this adult learning community, you will be re-figuring the past and creating purpose for the future as you make meaning of your own experiences. (C & C, 1988).

So that you will not just move through this training and educational experience, completing tasks for a letter grade, I am inviting you to stop, breathe, and continually reflect on this question: What am I doing? Think back, reread your journals, and reflect on them.

To write your narrative, use the stories that you wrote in your journal as your resource, and as your data. These stories should be about you, the learner. In each journal entry there is likely a story of your experience.

All stories have plots, but like in many stories, this may not be all that obvious at first. Go back and reread the stories. Read them to others. Read them to yourself. Ask questions about the stories. As you examine these stories, your personal practical knowledge will become apparent. Look for themes, threads, and patterns in your stories. Storytelling is one of many tools to help you "think back," and come to understand yourself. The process of reconstructing events in the past is designed to be useful in understanding ourselves in the present.

Journals

Wanting to keep the playing field flat and equal - a throwback from the adult education literature (Brundage and Mackeracher, 1980; Cranton, 1992), and a concept that I had readily accepted when I was a beginning teacher - I told the students that I, like them, would be keeping a journal. I entered back into the classroom situation with the decision to keep two separate journals. I wrote my reflections and thinking for my Friday afternoon class in one journal. In another, I captured my reflections and thoughts on my Thursday morning class. Each journal captured the full semester, which was three months of classes. Like all of my journals, each journal was indexed and categorized by identifying notions, rhythms and unities.

When I was introduced to journal and diary writing as a younger person, I suspect that I adopted the notion embedded in the inscription at the beginning of Ann Frank's journal:

> I hope that I shall be able to confide in you completely, as I have never been able to do in anyone before, and I hope that you will be a great support and comfort to me (Frank, 1952).

I have used learning journals as a reflective device and a significant and meaningful teaching canon for a number of years. I have found journals to be especially important when reflecting on particular teaching experiences that felt cumbersome and unusually challenging. In this way, journals have been embraced as a proactive tool in trouble-shooting, and as a tool in self-evaluation to measure growth and change. At the onset of my 1994 return to school in Brock University's Bachelor of Education program in Adult Education, I became especially serious about journaling my teaching life. Since this time, I have continued to use journals.

For each phase of my thesis, research journals are used extensively. There are a number of distinctions between my personal journal writing and how I have used journals for this thesis research. For thesis journal writing I wrote on one side of the page only, leaving the other side of the page blank. Often times, when re-reading the journals, I used the extra space for further reflection and reconstruction.

I experimented with a variety of journal writing formats, including using the computer. When I write field notes, I like to be in front of the computer. It feels important for me to obtain an orderly and structured format for organizing my fields notes. I found that I had my best journal writing results when I hand wrote in a small, sturdy notebook that could sustain inserts made throughout my research day. I wanted to capture the context and research experience as soon as I could following the conversations with my co-participants and the classroom teaching which was also a part of my research. Many of my journal entries were written in places other than at OISE or at home in my working space. I wrote journals in coffee shops and libraries and sometimes while sitting in a mall or in my car and in parks; other times I wrote in outdoor spaces before or after meeting with one of my co-participants. For easy access, my journals are stored in a large wicker basket underneath my home computer workstation where I do most of my thesis writing.

As I read through each of my journals, I contemplated patterns, threads, inities, and questions that evolved from the data. I also paid special attention to rhythms and temporalities through the field texts. I described the classroom atmosphere in detail. I paid attention to the out-of-classroom space, noting the weather and driving conditions. I recalled student conversations about their program assignments and due dates. When students spoke to me about their lives off the landscape, at their field placements and part-time jobs, I used my journal to capture what I was learning about their lives. Sometimes I continued my thoughts, writing either in the margins or on the backside of the page. Often times I posed new questions as I constructed further field texts. Subsequent to my work as a research assistant on one of Connelly and Clandinin's research projects, I gave journals and field notes code names that captured specific context. On the front cover of each of my thirteen journals I have indicated the temporal period of the research. As I reviewed each individual research journal, I identified research codes, including key terms, names of people and places, questions, categories, temporal qualities and themes in my research. Each journal has been indexed with research codes and journals pages have been numbered which I entered into my computer so that I could easily draw on the computer's capacity to find the source of my journal entry quickly. Each journal, titled in chronological order, is identified with a letter.

When I was in the classroom with my students, there were clearly moments when I was fully aware of my role as researcher. Sometimes I jotted down a word or two to remind myself to write about a certain event or moment in the classroom. But for the most part, when I was in the classroom, I was the teacher. I realized my field notes and journal writing to be important vehicles in pulling me into the role of researcher at the end of my teaching day. Sometimes I struggled with what I felt was a dualistic split. My journal writing, more than in my field notes, illustrates that my teacher voice is foremost in my thinking and writing. In my journal, I first tell about the experience. I tell the story, writing fluidly and with a lot of detail. Re-reading and reconstructing my journals, I notice that my researcher voice is prevalent. However, as I read I also re-experienced the sense of crossing borders and boundaries between being the researcher and the teacher. Often times in my journal writing, especially in light of the classroom chaos, my wounds felt fresh. I sometimes felt defensive, disappointed, or even angry. It was during these times when I felt most self-conscious about my researcher self, and when I was able to empathize and identify with Anzaluà's definition of borders in terms of a defining line or narrow strip on a steep edge. My journal captures puzzles and issues of teacher identity that were at play, and the occasional sense that my earlier confident teacher identity was unravelling. Using my research journal in this way makes the borders between teaching and research permeable.

Choosing my Participants

From the time that I first entered the classroom, and beyond the semester's completion, I was concerned about choosing participants from among the students in my classroom for my thesis research. I pondered how to invite *only* three or four students from among all of the individuals enrolled in the subject. At the same time, as immersing myself in the curriculum and the teaching/learning relationship, I found myself imagining the feasibility of a participant/researcher relationship, with particular students, in classroom. Through the duration of the semester, I quietly considered, reflecting in my journal, several students who might be participants in my thesis research. Among those students were Kate, Peggy and Sophia. I am including my story of choosing participants, not only because it sheds further light on students who enroll in the community college experience, but also to reveal a beginning researcher's dilemma. Embodied in the student stories that follow, are tensions of a researcher / teacher dialectic.

Kate

During an early phase of my research inquiry and within the first two sessions, I considered a student named Kate. I was intrigued by her directness. I learned early in the semester that Kate worked hard to achieve a high standard for herself. Later in the semester, I sensed that she was pleased, and somewhat surprised, by her academic progress. I liked the way she used me as a resource and that she felt comfortable enough to have a relationship with me outside the classroom. Kate was curious and asked many questions. She left no stone unturned. She visited my office often, and telephoned to clarify assignments. I recall an in-depth conversation that I had with her in the parking lot of her field placement, after visiting her there. I learned that after graduating from high school, Kate worked as a waitress. Describing herself as efficient, she said her "tips were good" and that she "made a lot of money." Kate told me about her past experiences as a student and her future hopes about having a career and raising a family. It was during conversations like these, when my feelings were the strongest about inviting her into my research as a participant at the end of the semester. In my initial thinking about our budding relationship, I considered Kate's personal qualities in terms of sustaining both a teacher/student and researcher/participant relationship.

Kate wasn't by any stretch an 'easy student.' Memories of one notorious group work class reversed my decision about any further consideration of Kate's participation in my research. Kate's directness during this particular class actually intensified the already apparent conflict among one small group of students. In Kate's response to her peers – that some students took as hurtful – I heard undertones of truthfulness. Kate said unequivocally that she had biases and regarding group work, she prefers to work with students she knows because they are the people she trusts and the only ones who can influence her. "Trust doesn't come cheap" [Journal I, p. 21]. After the class, several students, one by one, came to my office to express their frustration about working with Kate in their small groups. Beyond this discomfort and close to the semester's ending, Kate announced, to her classmates, that she had no intention of *ever* entering the social services field. I recall Kate telling her peers that the very behaviours that they were complaining about in this class resembled her field placement setting. I watched some of the students, one of who has since become a participant in this study, bristle as the direct and harsh words came tumbling out of Kate's mouth.

My attention to avoid an endorsement of how Kate communicated her thoughts and feelings, and my desire to avoid any impression of favouritism towards Kate, shaped my decision (even though her response intrigued me) not to ask her to participate in my study.

Peggy

Another student who I briefly considered was Peggy. I was puzzled by Peggy and recall disclosing to one of the sessional instructors in the program my visceral reaction to the sometimes-sharp tone behind Peggy's words. My memory holds a picture of Peggy balancing herself on the two hind legs of a classroom chair positioned opposite me in the square table formation in the group work class. My colleague nodded and shared with me that the best word she can find to describe Peggy is acerbic. I had no sense of Peggy's personal narrative or why she responded the way she did, but I found myself being watchful of her. Peggy seemed to represent a story of myself as a teacher who sought to connect with students who appear off in the distance somewhere. While I experienced Peggy as acerbic, I also saw her as a free spirit, bright, and articulate and as a student who I could invite, though carefully, into classroom leadership.

With Peggy, I had the urge to work through obstacles similar to those of some of the adult women students I worked with, earlier in my teaching career. On one occasion when she visited my office to apologize for an interaction in the class, I was mindful of the shift in Peggy's altered comportment. My journal captured feelings of warmth towards Peggy as she stood awkwardly at the door of my office. I noted that I had to coax Peggy to actually cross the office-doorway. During our conversation, Peggy apologized for an earlier response, which in her mind was inappropriately uttered, in the classroom. At the same time Peggy shared her ideas with me about how to "make the class work." Peggy suggested that every student in the class be assured, at the least, a B grade. She proposed that I consider giving students who "don't want to be there," the choice of not continuing with the subject. "They could go away with their B grade." Peggy promoted the notion that the remaining students in the class would be made up of the people, who wanted to continue learning about group work, and also the opportunity of obtaining an A grade. "This way, we will be working with those people who want to be there." (Journal I, p. 54.)

I momentarily considered the feasibility of Peggy's involvement in my thesis as a participant and as someone from who I could learn. However, I did not invite Peggy to be a participant in my research, on the basis, I still felt uncertain about the intersection of our personal narratives. Over two consecutive semesters, Peggy was a student in my classrooms. Along with the group work class, Peggy was a student in two of my field placement seminars and I was the faculty advisor to her second-year field practicum. Overall, throughout the duration of working with Peggy, in various learning situations, I observed her manner of communicating with others, as forbidding. After consulting with Peggy's field placement supervisor, we agreed to work together in providing Peggy the support we felt she needed to perceive herself as others see and experience her. As her teacher, I acknowledged Peggy's style of response, as a probable challenge to her success in the workplace. As the researcher, who wanted to function collaboratively with her participants, I considered that Peggy required more time – to digest the feedback, received by her supervisor and myself, about working collaboratively with others and –to integrate our story of her, into her personal narrative.

Sophia

The third student I considered, and went so far to invite her to think about becoming a participant. I considered Sophia because I was drawn to her enthusiasm. After I talked about the classroom being an adult learning community, and the idea of students learning and moving along the learning continuum from learners who were teacher-directed to becoming self-directed learners, she visited my office to say that she looked forward to working within this concept. She had completed most of the course work in the continuing education program, and was hoping to complete her remaining courses in the daytime program. My journal captures how I felt about Sophia in contrast to some of my other relationships with students.

> *Somehow in the past two semesters, working both with the first and second-year students, I have literally come away from the classroom setting thinking and being aware of my aversion for some of the students. There used to be one or two students in a year who were un-likeable. Now there's two or three that are actually likeable.*

Echoes of this shift in my experience and feeling toward students are also threaded through the results of the 1999 unpublished employee attitude survey at one community college:

> When asked the question:
>
> How would you rate [the college] as a place to work today, compared to the past?
>
> Students are greater in number in class and more poorly prepared for college-level work and expectations (p.8).
>
> To the survey comment, I like the kind of work I do, responses included:
>
> Problems with rude, disrespectful students (p. 19).
>
> I like to teach, hate the crowd control in class (p. 19).
>
> I love to teach, but the environment and circumstances and the quality of the student has changed so much in 20 years, all decreasing exponentially. (p. 19).
>
> To the comment: My job makes good use of my skills and abilities:
>
> I am wasting my time, interest and expertise on students who are unfortunate, unmotivated and care less (p. 28).

In a similar vein, in a telephone conversation with a colleague about teacher/student relationships, my colleague asked, "is it me or them? Maybe it's a reflection of my age and the length of time I have been a community college teacher. Or, maybe the students have changed" (Personal communication, December 22, 2000).

How I experienced Sophia was in contrast to the above-noted faculty comments. In my journal I wrote:

> *I see Sophia as wanting to learn and grow. I see her as making a difference to the field when she graduates. This learner would also learn from being a participant. (Journal I, February 14, 1998, p. 40).*

The expectation I had of the researcher/participant relationship reflects the relationship that I also seek in the teacher/student relationship in the teaching and learning situation. I knew that I had to be respectful of Sophia's life inside and outside the classroom. I contemplated in my journal…

> *On second thought, Sophia is so busy. She is a sole support mother. ...Children's recital rehearsals and out-of-town dance competitions, plus hockey practice.... She writes her journals and does her course readings in coffee shops between stopovers for her kids. ... As a participant she would likely learn and grow. But does she have time? To ask her, feels to impose on her already complex life. (Journal I, February 14, 1998, p. 40a).*

I moved back and forth in my struggle about whether Sophia was a person I wanted to work with as a participant in my study. One month later, at a faculty meeting, a teacher's story prompted me to reconstruct the meaning of an earlier encounter that I had Sophia.

> *I remembered that she knocked on my door at 9 p.m. on a Friday night to drop off an assignment. My husband answered the door and took the assignment. She asked to talk to me, and he told her that I was lying down. She insisted. Annoyed my husband whispered to me, "she wants to talk to you." I grabbed my robe. Sophia apologized. [She then told me about a personal matter.] ... It made sense that she insisted on talking to someone. I just thought she was upset and I listened.. (Journal M, March 20, 1998, p. 54).*

As the teacher's story of Sophia was unveiled I found myself reconstructing my earlier acceptance and understanding of her insistence of speaking to me at the door of my home.

Rethinking my choice of participant, and responding the above journal entry, I wrote, almost one year later:

> *I decided to step away from my consideration of Sophia as a research participant. (Response to Journal M, January 3, 1999 p. 54).*

My colleague's story about Sophia aroused my concern. Though I was somewhat unclear about the relationship between the student and the faculty member, I anticipated the possibility of complications relative to the relationship complexities between colleagues, administration, the student and my research. The pattern and unities threaded through my story of Sophia and my colleague's experience with her, were highlighted over time and became a narrative sign that percepts negotiation of researcher/participant relationship and negotiation of exit, could be problematic.

Pushing the Boundaries

So far in this chapter, I described my experience of considering three different students in my classroom as possible participants for my research. I discussed the tension I lived in the classroom, as a teacher/researcher pushing to choose and decide on individuals who I thought would be most appropriate as participants in my narrative research study. As novice researcher I had a range of concerns. I was concerned about being a teacher who was both collaborative and inclusive of the individuals in the group work learning situation. I wanted my classroom to resemble a learning environment that was egalitarian, inclusive and free from petty jealousies and notions of favourtism that might evolve out of a projected teacher/researcher participant relationship.

I was also anxious to learn from and use Clandinin and Connelly's (1988) notion of the negotiation of narrative that embraces their three key terms, *collaborative research*, *ethics of participation* and the concept of *negotiation*. Though I had established the required negotiation of research steps from the college and the university, I understood that with narrative inquiry, negotiation would be ongoing and throughout my entire thesis research experience. What I had less clarity about was *who* I was negotiating with, and this is the relationship, in my own mind, that I tried to secure prematurely. I considered that if I had a sense of which students I would be working with as co-participants in the research relationship at the end of the semester, that I was moving forward in my thesis work. In moving from field texts to research texts, I came to understand more clearly the meaning behind Clandinin and Connelly's point about the required nature of the relationship in narrative research:

> Collaborative research constitutes a relationship. In everyday life, the idea of friendship implies a sharing, an interpenetration of two or more persons' spheres of experience. Mere contact is acquaintanceship, not friendship. The same may be said for collaborative research, which requires a close relationship akin to friendship. Relations are joined, as McIntyre implies, by the narrative unities of our lives (Clandinin and Connelly, 1988, p. 281).

During the temporal period that I was a teacher/researcher in the classroom, I was attempting to push my decision about who would be in my research as a co-participant. I didn't know the students in my class like in other years because I was just returning from a one-year sabbatical. Nor did the students know me. Adequate time had not transpired for relationship and trust-building to permeate the narrative unities of our classroom lives.

Considering the reasons for not pursuing my interest in Kate, Peggy and Sophia as participants in my research, has provided me with new awareness. In the thrust and hurried pace of the semester where I was beginning my research as a researcher new to narrative inquiry, I was challenged in my role as teacher/researcher to delve deeply into the experience of each of these women. From reading and re-reading my field notes, I gained a greater understanding and impact of the temporal pace of an unfolding and shifting narrative of people, places and events while *in* the research. At the same time, it was a challenge to shift from embracing and thinking about the classroom from a calendar and procedural perspective. My attention and intrigue about the students' transformation toward personal and professional growth was embedded in my teacher identity. My relationship with each of student was shaped by the temporal dimension of the semester. The participant/researcher relationship required communication cornerstones beyond the parameters of the classroom's semester. The participant/researcher relationship is more reflective of qualities that are foundational to a friendship than is usually permitted in a student/teacher relationship that is rooted in a community college classroom situation.

In the reconstruction of my field texts: journal entries, field notes, student papers and audio-taped transcriptions of participant interviews, I realized that to understand the classroom situation narratively I needed to be more patient with the research narrative process. I needed to take more time to know the students as individual people who might collaborate with me in a research study. I see that I needed to be more cognizant of the student's life narratives, and their previous experiences in group work and the many other circumstances of their Helping Profession program.

Invited Co-participants

The student's narrative life prior to my return from my sabbatical were pieces of the puzzle in the group-work classroom experience that were not part of my awareness. I had only an administrator's cover story and my past professional practical knowledge, from an earlier time, and assumptions about who the students were to guide my decisions and projected design for the course outline. I did not know the students and they did not know me. The students' narrative assignment papers read by me at the end of the semester, were instrumental in my decision-making about who would become participants in my thesis research. The narrative papers provided me with insight into individual students' lives. It seems the papers provided students with a safe place to reveal themselves and the meaning of their experience in the group work class. It was through individual student writing that I came to the know students at a level deep enough to invite them into my research as co-participants.

Lucielle, Cecilia and Lexia

Lucielle, Cecilia and Lexia agreed to let me include excerpts from their narrative papers in my thesis research. On completion of the semester, after reading and evaluating all of the narrative papers, and at various intervals in my thesis process, I invited each woman to collaborate in my study. I asked Lucielle to participate in my research three months after the close of the semester. My invitations to Lexia and Cecilia were almost two years after the course when I re-visited the student's narrative papers. Narrative threads through each of these women's story about their personal life journeys and life inside and outside the community college classroom sheds light on the meaning of the group work class experience.

Lucielle, my key participant, is the person I spent the most time with and therefore I know her the best. Lucielle has reviewed each transcription of our three intensive conversational interviews. I have also provided Lucielle with field note summaries of our shared telephone conversations. In addition, Lucielle has collaborated in the writing of the research texts. Cecilia and Lexia are also participants in my research and I use their work as necessary to illustrate and show telling stories about classroom life. Cecilia and Lexia have also reviewed research texts, and have collaborated in this study.

The life narratives and student stories of Lucielle, Cecilia and Lexia and how they talk about their classroom and community college experience provides significant narrative detail to both the meaning and the understanding of curriculum to the lives of people who live on the community college landscape. Excerpts from student narrative assignments permeate chapter six as a way of telling the classroom story. Following my account of the group work class experience and the puzzles that ensued, a narrative reflection of my participant's lives at the intersection of the group work classroom experience follows. In chapter seven, as I reflect on the narrative of the classroom experience, I try to understand the history of the classroom puzzles. Following the classroom story, my participants' life narratives are explored further, together with the classroom puzzles in chapter eight.

Using the form of a playwright, chapter six unfolds through Act One, Act Two and Act Three. The story is situated on a new and temporary classroom site over the temporal period of a 1998 community college semester. The rhythm and temporal dimensions of the community college semester system provides the framework that holds the plot line of the semester story. I provide a profile of the classroom to position the story. Both my co-participants and I are among the cast of characters in the story about the group work classroom. Biographical sketches of my co-participants acquaint my reader to the student voices threaded through the plot of the semester, the discussion, and the analysis. The chapter framework that follows resembles a live-theatre program, and situates Acts One, Two and Three of my semester story.

Chapter Six

A Post-Secondary Classroom: Collision, Chaos and Transformation in Three Acts

Prelude

Cast of Characters

Bev	Teacher/Researcher
Lucielle	Key Co-participant
Cecilia	Co-participant
Lexia	Co-participant

Biographies - Cast

Character Sketch of Lucielle

Over the temporal period of coming to know Lucielle, the plot line of her life story embodied divorce, a custody battle, single motherhood, re-marriage, three houses, two jobs, and an expectant child. When she was a student in my classroom, Lucielle was thirty-two years old. A child of Portuguese immigrants, Lucielle was born and grew up in a large Canadian urban center as a young child with her parents and her older sister. Prior to her first marriage Lucielle dreamt about being a police officer. With her engagement to her first husband, Lucielle considered the high divorce rate of police officers and came to work in secretarial positions in a large corporation. Lucielle also worked as an administrative assistant civil servant position in a large city centre. With a new home in a rural community, a new baby, and a very long commute, Lucielle's life was chaotic and unsatisfying. Not long after her marriage to her first husband and the birth of her second daughter, Lucielle found herself in an abusive marital situation. After a miscarriage, and as the tensions in her married life increased, Lucielle pursued an alternative life situation for herself. She participated in a Life Skills and vocationally orientated program for women in transition and soon after enrolled in a continuing education helping profession diploma program.

When we talked about a pseudonym, my participant told me that she likes Lucielle. She thinks that it is unusual and different. "Just like I am," she said, "Lucielle sounds Portuguese." In our initial conversation about confidentiality, she told me that she didn't want her cultural background to be fictionalized. At the end of our telephone conversation she enthusiastically asked, "When are we going to get together?" (Field note, December 14, 1998).

Character Sketch of Cecilia

Cecilia entered community college immediately after high school. She applied and was accepted at three colleges.

Cecilia considered living away from home, boarding and long commutes and decided to attend the college closest to her home. Cecilia excelled in her high school subjects and had the appropriate grades for university entrance. She weighed the financial cost of a four-year university education with the financial cost and the time it would take to complete a two-year community college diploma that would prepare her more quickly for the workplace. Cecilia decided she wanted to move sooner "than later" into the workplace. Cecilia lived at her family home with her father and sister. She also had the full support of her mother who lived close by the family home. Cecilia was a full-time student and occasionally babysat for "a little extra money," but her parents agreed to pay for her education if she worked hard. While a student in the community college program, Cecilia achieved all 'A's' and graduated with High Honours. Cecilia works hard for her grades. She finds herself in contrast with one of her peers who was always first to finish tests, and wrote essay papers easily. Cecilia wants to answer the questions on tests and in course assignments seriously and with her very best effort. She calls herself a perfectionist.

Cecilia understands herself as having entered college and the Helping Profession program with "a lot of misconceptions."

In Cecilia's opinion, her peers didn't really care about the dynamics in the class, but she is fascinated and tries to understand the student interaction in the group work classroom.

Currently, Cecilia works in the mental health field, has a caseload, and is the youngest member on a mental health advisory board.

Cecilia told me that her choice of pseudonym was likely the only chance she will get to name someone after her grandmother, since her boyfriend doesn't like the name. When she spoke to her boyfriend about pseudonyms, he suggested, "Why not Cecilia? You love that name."

Character Sketch of Lexia

Lexia entered the community college classroom at a satellite location around the corner from her high school. In the year between graduating from high school and entering college, Lexia worked in construction and at her mother's store. The high school program that Lexia graduated from allowed her to achieve three credits for paid work experience. Lexia declined her grandparent's offer to finance her university education and chose community college. Lexia was the only member among her peers who continued with formal education after high school, and her best friend had already started her family. While a student in college, Lexia achieved high grades, always preferring to work on her own rather than in a group. Lexia prefers not to speak up in a group. Though Lexia had completed the prerequisite group work course, she can't recall the experience like she can this group work class, but she thought that the two experiences must have been quite different. The 1998 group work class was a "totally different way of thinking" and she found the assignments challenging, but likes them because they made her think. Lexia is of the opinion that the activities in this class should occur earlier in the program.

As a student in the regular stream of the program, Lexia spent two full years at the satellite location of the college. She feels "ripped off" by her whole college experience and considers that she "didn't really have a college life experience." Lexia was expecting pubs and a cafeteria. "No library, no counsellors, and no place to photocopy or to sit and wait if there was a snow storm, and basically, no fun - sort of like high school." Lexia sees that students come and go because there is no place to socialize and she doesn't make any friends at college. For Lexia, the time of the group work class "sucked" because she had two spares before the

class. "So, I went home, and it was really hard to come back
to an office building."

Lexia finds women "a little hard to trust" and feels
"uncomfortable with the competition in the program." She
doesn't like the way the teachers differentiate the accelerated
students and give them advanced standings "in front of the
rest of us." Lexia thinks that everyone should be tested to
determine who should be accelerated so that bad feelings
can be avoided.

In high school Lexia was "soured by group work." Currently,
Lexia is working at a large corporation in a team work
situation.

(Field note, February 15, 2001)

Setting

The Helping Profession program is situated on the second floor of a new, three-story office building leased by the college. Dentists, doctors, lawyers, and real-estate brokers also share this office space. There is a variety store and a small eatery on the ground floor of the building. The building is situated on a busy roadway and is surrounded by a large parking lot. The leased space consists of five classrooms. Two of these classrooms are computer labs. One large classroom space is divided by a ceiling to floor accordion-like room divider that can accommodate large or small student groups. One other classroom has a sink and two hospital beds, as it is primarily set up for the use of the health profession programs. A classroom on the third floor contains a pop machine, with the idea that students would use this space as a lunchroom. The rooms that served as classrooms were at one end of the building, and faculty and administration offices were at the other. A photocopier was positioned outside the faculty's office space. When students needed to photocopy, they used the copier in the variety store. Since there was no on-site library, students and faculty could order library resources through the secretary. The on-site computers were not connected to the college's library system.

Situating the Characters

The class consisted of thirty-five students, thirty-two women and three men ranging between eighteen and fifty-two years of age. The personal/professional goals and educational frameworks that the students brought to the classroom situation were diverse. The formal education of the students in this classroom consisted of four different streams. First, there were full-time-day students who planned to complete their program of study in at least four semesters (two years). The second thread of students were a number of students enrolled in non-standard programs, which meant they could complete their course work at their own pace. Full-time students enrolled in the daytime, in either the standard or non-standard program thread, completed twenty-six subjects and participated in two different field placement practicums in their second, third and fourth semesters. Cecilia and Lexia were student members in this group.

The third stream of students, and the most recent change to the traditional and longstanding structure of the Helping Profession program, was the addition of the accelerated program thread. Accelerated students either held undergraduate degrees, a college diploma in a related discipline, or evidence of program-related learning and experience in the workplace. Accelerated students complete fourteen subjects in three semesters (ten months) and participate in one field placement experience over two semesters. They engage in an accelerated pace which means the students completed their first semester of classes in a seven-week interval in the May and June semester period. (In the past, the May/June temporal period was reserved for faculty professional development, attendance at conferences, and program and curriculum review). The first semester of this intensive program consisted of five subjects that required extensive reading, reflection and application of skills and knowledge in research papers and student presentations. On completion of this intensive experience, this accelerated student group of twenty-five was streamlined into the third semester of the full-time regular program.

The fourth program stream was a small number of students who moved back and forth between the course offerings of the full-time day and the part-time continuing education programs. Lucielle was a member of this group.

At the time of my actual research in the classroom, the accelerated program was in its final phase of a pilot project. In the final phase, the students in the accelerated group were streamlined into the regular group of students who were also in their third semester. Streamlining these two groups was a first-time experience for the faculty. My point of entry into these students' lives and the group work class under study was in their fourth and final semester of their program.

A Question of Identity

Beginning with a journal entry written just four weeks before the end of the semester, I question my identity as a community college educator. This question is at the core of my inquiry. The classroom experience that I discuss in Acts One, Two and Three is one story on the continuum of my community college teaching life of twenty years. This experience is highlighted in the form of a micro-study, and is my attempt to understand what happens in community college classrooms.

> *If I were a first-time teacher, and had the semester of experience that I recently had, I think I might believe that, as a teacher, I am quite inadequate; or, perhaps I'd quit before I got started; or at the very least, I would feel quite uncertain about my sense of myself as a teacher. (Journal Entry, March 22, 1998, p. 49).*

To reconstruct the meaning and to understand this journal entry narratively, I pose a number of questions. First, why was I comparing myself to a first-time teacher? Could it be that I have the notion that community college teachers with longer teaching histories are to have no problems with the classroom? Are community college teachers not to feel uncertain? Perhaps because my beginning and middle years didn't feel chaotic, I had the notion that I should never encounter any discomfort with students and the classroom. I considered my sabbatical a disadvantage in terms of my entry into the students' lives in the last semester of their life in the program. I also questioned the sacred and cover stories about teachers, students and their relationships inside and outside the classroom. I wondered about the cover story beneath a statement of one of my administrators who told me that I would be working with "a really good group of students," and returning to faculty who were "getting along really well." Before taking my sabbatical leave, it was my experience that the curriculum was indeed *broken*, and that the relationship among the faculty - from my perspective - was one of distrust and turmoil. Had the *curriculum*, as I had come to embrace it following Schwab's (1973) four commonplaces of subject matter, teacher, learner, and milieu, been *fixed*? The questions that I am asking are as much about the curriculum as they are about the community college landscape in a changing world.

The above journal entry is about an experience of change on the community college landscape. This classroom situation was unlike my past experience - on which I was basing my program design and my expectations of students. I thought the students would embrace a group work experience that I had successfully taken into previous classrooms and community settings time and time again.

One purpose of my thesis inquiry is to delve into the cover stories that exist about teaching and learning in post-secondary classrooms in the community college context. This inquiry also delves into community college teacher identity, and how it shapes and is shaped by the changing community college landscape. Apparent in my story of experience is how sacred stories about adult learning communities, feminist pedagogy and collaborative and egalitarian learning environments shape a teacher's identity and the community college classroom situation.

In my teaching life, I recall feeling quite adequate, except of course when Larry (one of my very first students during my apprenticeship), blew smoke directly in my face. But on the whole, during the beginning and middle years, as indicated by teacher evaluations, notes and cards from students and colleagues, and my own learning journals, I felt quite adequate as a community college teacher. I was confident and capable of learning from my mistakes. I felt somehow assured by the adult education theoretical literature that I embraced. I also accepted the notion that my students, who I accepted as adults (many were older than I was), could teach me a lot.

Relationship was a key component to my teacher identity. My teacher identity was tied with community. Clandinin and Connelly (1999) assert that the intensity of the dilemma experienced by the teacher, is somewhat connected with the identities each teacher lives out in his/her work. Among the dilemmas I was living out in the 1998 semester, was the loss of effectual relationships with students and classrooms that felt like communities. Earlier, my working relationships with students *brought meaning to the curriculum,* and my classrooms felt like a place where people came to learn in community – two qualities that shaped my teacher identity. In light of the discrepancy between earlier experiences with effectual teacher/student relationships, in classrooms that felt like learning-communities, my hopes for the 1998 semester learning community felt fraudulent.

Researchers Note: Navigating My Research

Through this thesis, I continue to use story to assist me in telling, retelling and interpreting events in my own life, so that I can understand myself as a teacher in relation to the past, present, and future. To illustrate the value of story, I draw on Heilbrun's (1988) *Writing a Women's Life*:

> What matters are that lives do not serve as models: only stories do that. And it is a hard thing to make up stories to live by. We can only retell and live by the stories we have read or heard. We live our lives through texts. They may be read or chanted, or experienced electronically, or come to us like the murmurings of our mothers, telling us what conventions demand. Whatever their form or medium, these stories have formed us all: they are what we must use to make new fictions, new narratives (p. 37).

Heilbrun's quote positions the value of story in educational research and is particularly relevant to my inquiry because it is through my own writing and storying that I engage in telling, retelling and reconstructing of a complex series of events. Through this process, the connections I make in the multitude of puzzles that exist in complex and dynamic situations, in the community college classroom illuminates the relationship among people, places, events, and things on the community college landscape. It is in the illumination of these relationships where I find the kernels of understanding that shed light on a community college teacher's evolving professional identity. Heilbrun states, "The sense of self, rooted in a person's past, arises out of manifold interactions with things, some of them, like the *crack* in the baseboard or the *jingle*, reiterated over longer or shorter periods of time" (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 37) [italics added]. Following Crites (1986) notion, for my research journals on the classroom I draw on "present and remembered experiences" (p. 158). Teaching and learning experiences in the present trigger experience from the past. The past triggered my thinking and influenced my focus and my writing about the present. These temporal dimensions are evident through Acts One, Two and Three where the classroom semester story unfolds.

I build on Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) notion:

> The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are story telling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world. This general notion translates into the view that education is the construction and reconstruction of their own and other's stories (p. 2).

In *Composing a Life*, Bateson reveals that it was through "a disgruntled reflection" of her own life as a sort of "desperate improvisation" in which she was constantly attempting to procure a "coherence in changing settings" (1990, p. 3). Bateson's words resonated with how I thought of myself as a *dis-empassioned* teacher. My attempt to unveil the evolving sense of who I am as a teacher begins with my own "disgruntled reflection" on my teaching practice with a particular group of students in a particular classroom in a 1998 semester.

How This Chapter Proceeds

The purpose of the Acts One, Two and Three is to bring forward an understanding about community college classroom life in times of change. This story of teaching is also a curriculum story. I embrace the theoretical underpinnings of Connelly and Clandinin and their notion of curriculum (1988) as the framework for my analysis of this particular classroom experience. The focus of my inquiry is on my Thursday afternoon Division B classes. Had I written about my Friday morning classroom experience, Division A, the reader would encounter a teaching and learning experience that was less turbulent. I wrote about my Division B experience because of the range of puzzles and depth of turmoil in the classroom.

I have used the dates and topic headings from the actual subject outline to frame my discussion. The subject outline, which can be found in Appendix B, was designed for this January 1998 group work course. The students were in their fourth and final semester of the two-year diploma program. The headings, session topics and dates from the subject outline are indicated in ten-point bold. Field texts, which include excerpts from my research journals, conversational transcripts and teaching stories, are intermingled through my account and reconstruction of this classroom experience. Journal and field note texts are made explicit using text that is indented and in italics. Drawing from the final narrative papers, student voices are interwoven through Acts One, Two and Three. Student writing is made explicit using a variation of fonts and indented text.

At the end of the semester, after the student grades were submitted, I chose the narrative papers of Lucielle, Cecilia and Lexia because of their depth of inquiry. Though many of the students in the two sections of this group work class wrote good papers, these three students embraced temporal dimensions and a multiplicity of events on the continuum of the group work class experience. These students, all women in Division B, wrote about personal transformation. The puzzles presented in their papers intrigued me. There was an integrity about Cecilia and Lexia's papers that appealed to my own need as a researcher. Cecilia and Lexia drew on their journals. Some students chose to write about one or two classes only, but Cecilia and Lexia's papers embraced the whole experience and the continuity of their classroom story of experience unfolded in their writing.

Lucielle's narrative paper interested me because she thought to weave people, places, and life events from her personal life into her meaning making about the classroom experience. I was also interested in learning about her experience of crossing the border and boundaries between the continuing education and full-time programs.

The student voices embedded in the final narrative papers were not part of the in-classroom discourse and, therefore, not known to me at the actual time I was teaching the class. Without the narrative papers where students wrote and reconstructed their experience in this classroom situation, these student voices may still be unheard. It is only in their narrative reconstruction that students are in the experience with me and taking responsibility for asking questions about group work and what was going on in the class.

As I delve into the narrative construction of one community college classroom, the narrative assignment papers followed by conversations with each of my co-participants has afforded me the opportunity to consider the temporal dimensions of the students' past, present and future. I draw on interview transcripts and my co-participants' narrative assignment papers to form a fictionalized conversation among the students in the 1998 group work classroom.

Act One

In the Beginning: Expectations and Collisions

January 15 to February 12, 1998

Classroom session one through five

Act Two

Midway Evaluation

February 19 to March 27, 1998

Classroom session six through ten

Act Three

A Semester Comes to Completion

Final Class Session, April 9, 1998

Chapter Six A

Act One

In the Beginning: Expectations and Collisions

Introduction

The 1998 classroom situation that I introduced in the previous chapter became a "testing ground" to my teacher identity. The classroom story is a story about place. My classroom story is also a story about change on a shifting community college landscape. The interconnection between these stories shapes the experience of the students and teachers in the classroom.

Session One Jan. 15/16
Introduction: Expectations & Explanations
If we're an adult learning community, what do you want to look like?
How to observe group behaviour (Green, p. 26 – 36)

Scene One:

There had been an early morning snowstorm. When the teacher arrived to the classroom, the tables and chairs were arranged in rows. She asked the students in the room to help arrange the desks so that they could all face one another. Ten minutes into the start of the class, a number of students listed on the registration sheet had not yet arrived. (Journal M Entry, p. 1).

TEACHER: Do you think we should wait? Do you know if they are coming?

STUDENT: They went home.

TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE:

It was my intention to go over the course outline and the assignments. I also wanted to get started with the student's expectations and goals for this class. I explained to them that it was my hope that we would come to feel like a "community of learners" in our time together. It was my intention to give the

> *students time to discuss the question "what do we want to look like as a learning community?" This question was imbedded in my acceptance that the classroom activity is supported by a notion in the group theory literature, that a group must develop goals. (Journal M Entry, January 15, 1998, p. 1)*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Throughout my working time over the semester with this group of students, I had a persistent feeling that the basis for much of the turmoil in the class lay in our first encounter. I was both anxious and enthusiastic about getting started. My actions in this first class were shaped by my intentions to tell the students about the course. Beginning the class with an orientation and information session was shaped by my previous experience. I felt strongly that the seeds planted in the first class would help shape a successful and meaningful teaching and learning experience throughout the semester. The meaningfulness that I embraced was partially shaped by my notion that classrooms should be communicative places. I wanted to plant the seed for a budding community of learners. These notions were also shaped by my adoption of Brundage and Mackeracher's (1980) *Principles of Adult Learning* that adult learners like to be informed. I know that as an adult learner, I like to know *what's coming*. As a learner, I prefer when the educator outlines his or her intentions for the course. I like to understand the structure I am entering into. For this class, I wanted to set the stage for an egalitarian learning environment and a teaching and learning environment not unlike those I had established when training group leaders in the community.

Asking the students to join together in moving the furniture so we could all face one another is embedded in a teaching rule that I have adopted for my students and myself throughout my teaching journey. Often times, with this request I am confronted with a dilemma. Moving the furniture, especially when the room is overcrowded with chairs and tables might, for some students, create a sense of chaos. I have sometimes hesitated to make this request when I have observed that some students are already seated and looking fairly established in their chosen classroom space. The other source of tension is the posted notice, which states furniture, must not be rearranged.

I handed out the course outlines with the assignment descriptions and reading lists for the semester. It has always been my custom to invite the students to go through the course outline as a group so that we can address any questions and concerns together. We began with the learning outcomes and I explained how this course was designed to take them beyond some of the fundamentals of group work that they had been introduced to in their second semester. I reminded them that the course I was teaching was considered an advanced group work course. I recall framing my objectives and expectations for the work that we were embarking on together as a preparation for their entry into the workplace, which was then only four months away.

In a narrative paper, a student reflection on the first session shows that one student's expectation was not the same as what I intended, therefore creating the likelihood of a collision.

> VOICE OF CECILIA: Ignorance, in the sense of lack of knowledge, was as well the key player in my misinterpretation of the class's purpose. I assumed that this course was going to be an exact repeat of the one, which was instructed by xx in the second semester. Due to my close-mindedness, I initially shut out the possibility that I might actually learn some new and relevant information concerning group work, and in doing so also shut out the possibility of learning new and relevant information about my other classmates and myself. In any new group, this is one of the most destructive attitudes you could bring to it. (Narrative paper submitted April 16, 1998).

TEACHER/RESEARCHER NARRATOR: The student's expectations and the teacher's notion for the direction of the curriculum resulted in an immediate collision. The student's notion was that this particular curriculum subject matter was going to be like her previous experience in the program. This student expected the fourth-semester group work course to resemble her first group work course experience. With my introduction to the course outline, the student's notion of the curriculum on the continuum of her own experience and expectations was shattered; the student consequently experienced disappointment

My notion of the group work curriculum was rigorous and was shaped by my actual life experience working with groups in the community. This thread of experience in my personal past shaped my curriculum and my understanding about students' futures. My curriculum was pushing beyond the student's previous experience and into the future. Just as the student's past experience shaped the student's expectations and disappointment, my teacher professional past was shaping the direction of the subject matter. The life narratives of the teacher and the student were in collision.

As we progressed through the course outline and what I considered a thorough explanation of the assignments, a number of students started to gather their bags and put on their coats. I checked my watch and saw there was more than one hour left.

TEACHER: Are you leaving?

STUDENT: Class is over.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER NARRATOR: I told her that the class was not over until three-thirty, and it was not yet two-thirty.

STUDENT: It's only a two-hour class.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER NARRATOR: I considered the possibility that our timetables were different, so I asked the other students about the time. A couple of people shrugged as if to suggest they didn't know or they didn't want to venture into the debate. Another student said she would always have to leave a half-hour early so that she could get to her part-time job. Another student said that she thought the class was three-hours and then added that she wanted to leave early because of the snowstorm.

The dynamic interaction embedded in this particular classroom moment was intense. For the students, the varying levels of knowing and not knowing one another, and not knowing me, created the interactive tension lived out in the classroom. As I mentioned earlier, I had just returned to teaching in the program and had no knowledge of these students' narrative histories. Nor did they know mine.

Suggesting that the relationship among the students had shifted from what it was in the past, Lexia identifies a historical dimension of this classroom situation. What happened in the history of the students working together in previous courses is brought forward into this 1998 group-work classroom situation. An excerpt from Lexia's narrative paper highlighted the historical dimension of past experience shaping the present interactive tensions embedded in the first group work class of the 1998 semester:

> VOICE OF LEXIA: I was pensive about our first session together; I didn't know what to expect. I'd never had Bev as a teacher, and I felt as though there was an uneasy distance between the class and myself. As school mates, our cohesion seemed to be at an all time low, there are people in the class that joined us last semester that I still hadn't developed a relationship with. The weather was also an issue, it was storming outside and my mind was preoccupied with having to venture out into these conditions. (Narrative paper submitted April 17, 1998.)

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER NARRATOR: The turbulent interactions inside the classroom and Lexia's feelings about relationships that were unsettled and still unknown seemed to parallel with what, from her perspective, was a snowstorm looming outside the classroom. In contrast, I looked out to the street and saw that the roads and the sky appeared clear. What was shaping these two contrasting perspectives between Lexia and myself?

I wanted the whole class to be a part of the beginning, and as a way to compromise - since most of them seemed anxious to go - I suggested we at least get through the outline. I confirmed that after today they could expect a three-hour class. I later spoke with the woman who told me she had to leave. I reminded her that this was a group process class, and suggested she might want to consider joining my Friday morning session so that she could stay for the whole experience. While I was attempting to problem-solve with one student and the demands of her life, another student was encountering an even stronger dynamic.

> VOICE OF CECILIA: There was an enormous amount of disarray ringing through class that very first day. People's confusion and frustration made seemingly self-explicable tasks, confounding and unencouraging. Because of this, I felt overwhelmed with feelings of uncertainty and doubt, emotions which I'm certain ran true on my face. (Narrative paper.)

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: The class felt large and chaotic. I felt that I needed to be careful not to react. Teacher conversations about students leaving early and missing classes because of part-time jobs, road conditions, and a variety of other reasons, were often at the forefront of staff meeting agendas. I wanted to get through the preliminary details for the course, and sell the textbooks that I had arranged to be delivered to the campus. I had opted out of the usual campus bookstore route based on my previous experiences the semester before of not having the books arrive.

* * *

TEACHER: Do you have any sense about why a number of students did not purchase the books?

> JOAN: Maybe they don't have the money. *[pause]* Tara hasn't bought the books yet. [pause] She declined your gesture to purchase the textbooks. She felt gratification in the fact you had carted all the books to class. (Student story about a student).

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: The tone embedded in the plot line of this student story about another student is among the narrative threads that created the tension that shaped my decision to write a careful letter to the students about their narrative papers when I returned them with my evaluation. (My letter to the students, seen in the previous chapter, was written later in the semester.) This disgruntled student's decision not to buy the required textbook raised questions about the notions of a community college curriculum. To understand the meaning of this student's decision, narrative questions about her educational history may provide a meaningful interpretation. If the student didn't see the textbooks as important, how does she story curriculum? The decision not to buy the required course textbook triggered questions about students' previous experiences in community college classrooms. Had the textbooks she purchased in the past not been useful? Did she not embrace subject matter reading as a resource? Perhaps her past notions of curriculum did not embrace books as part of the interaction. In this class, the reading log assignment was a central component. Did she plan not to read and to be outside the classroom learning experience? How was this student thinking about her future? Does this student's notion of the community college curriculum embrace her future?

This student's anger overflowed into the classroom like a river's water overflows its banks in the spring. Unlike the anticipated spring growth of small plants and seedlings, my notion of a budding community of learners seemed instead to be flooded by an intense tide of tensions rising both inside and outside the walls of the classroom.

The Reading Log

When we got to the assignments, one student suggested that the reading log, which was set at 35% and the narrative paper assignment, which was set at 45%, should be switched. I asked her why she thought so. Another student suggested that since there are three reading logs to be handed in, it would be easier to have them be worth 15% each rather than dividing 35% by three. Another student suggested that 45% is a lot to have for a final assignment. I told the students that I would think about it. I followed this up in the next class and explained to them that I had thought about and considered their suggestions, however, I had decided to leave things as they were.

The students' concerns about the evaluation scheme may have been one indication about how these students hoped to construct their lives throughout the semester. Could it be that the interactive tensions underlying these few classroom moments further shaped the experience that unfolded over the semester? Perhaps student notions about how the semester was going to unfold into their lives over the next three months, was in contrast with the demands embedded in the course outline.

The future shapes and reconstructs the classroom situation (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988). In the classroom situation the students' future embraces their concern about being evaluated and their grades in this subject. For example, for the students who planned to apply to university, evaluation and grades were significant. The student's future also embraced their daily lives, with their commitments and responsibilities to part-time jobs, loan payments[2] and relationships inside and outside life in the community college classroom.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) stipulate that the classroom situation has a *historical dimension.* In my classroom, student response to the assignments and the grading criteria had a *forward* and *backward* dimension. Every classroom situation grows out of some preceding classroom experience (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988). How students experienced assignments and the grading criteria of other course work, for example in situations where students had not been required to use APA or MLA formatting, shaped this particular situation in my classroom. I explained to the students that I would introduce, and assist them with the APA and MLA guidelines. I explained that a professional presentation of their work is an expectation of their field placement and the work place. At the same time, I was surprised that some of the university graduates in the accelerated stream seem out-of-sorts about this course requirement.

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[2] Student debt has increased for post-secondary students in universities and colleges. As noted in the ACAATO Environmental Scan, "Graduates of the Class of 1995 owed between 130% and 140% more to student loan programs than the Class of 1982. Overall, 46% of college graduates had borrowed from a student loan program, and on average owed $9,600" (ACAATO, 2000).

In the excerpt that follows, Cecilia reveals her shifting response to the reading log assignment. She moved from *second-guessing* her original understanding to *re-thinking* how other people's responses shaped her interpretation.

* * *

> VOICE OF CECILIA: I am definitely one individual who can be influenced by other's actions or responses. Regardless of how confident I feel in my level of understanding of a particular issue, if one person makes a statement contradicting my comprehension of the assigned tasks, I immediately begin to second-guess my thoughts. This is precisely what occurred with the Reading Logs. I initially felt that I had a good grasp on what was expected for this particular project, yet allowed myself to be coerced into confusion. (Student Narrative Paper).

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER NARRATOR: One of the things that I value about delving into a narrative of experience, is the opportunity to see the patterns that begin to evolve over time. Using narrative, the shaping quality of one student's distaste for the reading log assignment was evident. From my co-participant's narrative, I learned that the same student opinions that took me by surprise also impacted Cecilia thinking and the tension she was feeling. Cecilia's confusion and uncertainty shifted back and forth between what she thought she knew and her interpretation of her classmate's understanding. My journal encompasses my responding questions to the strong opinions voiced by the student.

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I wondered about her narrative history. What is it about this situation and me that appears to*

> *be rubbing against this student's narrative? (Journal Entry, January 15, 1998, p. 1).*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER NARRATOR: The narrative history behind another question in my journal – *what do I want the classroom to look like?* – lies in my past teaching experience. I hoped the students in the classroom would become a community of learners. Addressing the question asked in the previous chapter, *whose curriculum is it?* I see that I clearly outlined my own needs as a teacher. I wanted the students to be clear about the course outline and the direction of the course. The first class, in my mind, was the time and space to indulge in details and information giving. Over the years, I had come to embrace my course outline as a means to guide both the students and myself through the semester together. I was drawing heavily on my past teaching narrative.

* * *

> VOICE OF CECILIA: January 15th then became nothing more than a 'housekeeping' day, one where the course outline was read, reviewed, questioned, and then reviewed again. I got so caught up in the specifics of the assignments, that I completely overlooked the direct relation they had to the stated learning outcomes of the course, those which are the foundation to any learning experience. (Student narrative paper.)

* * *

TEACHER/RESEACHER/NARRATOR: My notion of a community of learners had also come from my more recent educational experience of being a student myself, and the sense I had about learning in isolation was reflective of my undergraduate learning experiences. How Deanna Kawatski (1996), author of *Clara and Me: The Story of an Unexpected Friendship*, captured the meaning of community in her own life, resonated with my hopes for the classroom as community:

> I saw that communities could teach us to live with people who are very different from us, ones we may not choose to be with. Yet the differences can also be a deep source of creativity and can end up benefiting both beings (1996, p. 164).

What narrative thread was being played out for me? I believe that my notion of 'plowing' through the course outline on the first day of classes was shaped by my sense that the students needed to know what they were getting into. In my reconstruction of this thinking, I wonder about the impact of community college language that embraces thinking about student as customer, client or stakeholder. My course outlines had become longer and more detailed. I'm reminded of being told that the outline is like a legal document; if the action, achievement or effort is not in the outline and there is an appeal, the student wins. More than the student winning, I was more concerned about appearing unprepared as a teacher. The narrative thread behind my insistence about getting through the outline with such clarity and preciseness, was partially shaped by my own uncertainty about the newly evolving criteria embedded in the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) endorsed by the college to evaluate teacher performance and the credibility of the program. However, for the students, the very experience of clarity that I sought for them, was embedded in my own need to protect my curriculum and myself from the possibility of any looming legal tensions and student dissatisfaction. The following excerpts from student narrative papers contain student voices revealing the interactive and varying tensions in response to my carefully worded and specifically detailed course outline.

> VOICE OF LEXIA: The outline of the class left me feeling overwhelmed; I'd never attempted a reading log, learning journal, or written narrative. I think my discomfort showed by the way I was positioned in relation to the rest of the class, I was sitting by myself, outside of the circle formation (Student narrative paper).
>
> STUDENT VOICE: I didn't see what the big deal was it was an assignment like any other. (Student narrative paper).
>
> VOICE OF CECILIA: I entered this class with the belief that it was not going to present me with any type of a challenge. After all, as far as I was concerned we were a highly cohesive group, one, which held each member in the utmost regard. Little did I know at the time, the group I believed we were in the beginning, was not at all the group we actually were in the end. (Student narrative paper).
>
> VOICE OF LEXIA: My previous experience in group settings have been quite limited, both of my field placements have been lacking in group work, I work as an individual. I felt as though everyone had "one up" on me, this made me

> determined, I was willing to try hard and get as much out of this experience as I possibly could. (Student narrative paper).

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: I wondered if I was reading too harshly into what felt like turmoil, chaos and negativity. I wondered if perhaps the students were feeling disturbed by the absence of a faculty member who had been recently laid off. To test this assumption, I mentioned his name, and I noticed the students exchanging of what looked like disapproving glances. I then ventured that since I was a new face among the faculty, they were simply going to test me.

* * *

SCENE CHANGE:

> *On the eve of day one of the semester, the teacher writes in her journal:*
>
> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I decided to keep my eye contact to a minimum, and plow through it. One student, Robin, seemed very defensive and argumentative with me. ... Some of my colleagues suggested that the Christmas break was too long. (January 15, 1998, p. 1).*

* * *

Cheating on the Landscape Shapes a Subject Outline

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: In the previous semester I experienced an unfortunate incident that shaped my thinking about how best to evaluate students and how best to get students to read. The following story about cheating shaped my approach to evaluating student learning in the group work course.

> TEACHER IN REFLECTION: I was supervising seventy-eight students writing their methods exam in the campus cafeteria during examination week. The custodians had set up two chairs at each of the oblong tables arranged in rows. I set the exam with mostly short answer questions, so I wasn't concerned about students seeing and copying from one

another's papers. I believe it was about half way through the exam when I noticed small pieces of papers beneath Elba's examination booklet. When our eyes met, I walked over and quietly asked her for the notes. As other students looked on, Elba handed me the index cards. I recall noticing that the writing in her exam booklet and the index cards were in pink ink. I remember feeling unsure about what to do. I asked for her paper and told Elba to go and explain to the department chair what had just happened. I recall telling that I would talk to her later. After the exam, another student in the class asked me what was going to happen to Elba. I told her that I didn't know. I *did* know that cheating and plagiarism, not something I had ever dealt with directly in my teaching experience, was cause for a student to fail. The next day I learned that Elba submitted an appeal. Her position was that she was not given the opportunity to complete the exam because I asked her for the paper. It was decided by the appeal committee, which was chaired by my department chair and consisted of faculty from other programs, that Elba be given another opportunity to pass the exam. ... In the large auditorium at the spring convocation that immediately followed the exam period, I alphabetically announced the names of the graduates into the shadows of the large audience. Just as I thought I made it to the bottom of my list, and as I was about to ask the audience to join me in congratulatory applause, my attention was averted to the left wing of the stage. ... I watched Elba approach the podium to receive her diploma and as I called out Elba's name, our eyes met. I remember feeling regret about the turn of events. I liked her and I thought that she would likely

> make a good helping profession worker. I thought it unfortunate I saw those small pieces of paper.

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: My beginning journal entries suggest the breadth of my thinking about my approach to the semester, the course outline, the classroom experience and evaluation. Unknown to me were the varying levels of comfort and angst among the students and how they felt about one another. Some of the students were friends; others were acquaintances. Some students were in conflict with one another. A relationship that I did not anticipate was one that was kept secret until it was revealed in a student's narrative paper. One student's beginning and secret dilemma reveals itself in her final narrative paper.

> VOICE OF CECILIA: On that very first day, my greatest concern stemmed from the fact that one of my clients from my field placement was as well a member of this adult learning community. Considering I was under the impression that this class process would greatly rely on the personal self-disclosure of the students, this immediately posed a conflict for me. Though in the field I am not the type of worker to keep my life completely secret from my clients, I was none the less concerned with how this might affect our professional relationship in a supposed intimate forum. Reflecting back on this attitude I held that day, I am quite ashamed that I viewed this situation so selfishly. After all, who is to say that he himself did not feel awkward about the class arrangement? This in itself proves how truly ignorant I was. (Student paper).

Session Two

Jan. 22 / 23 Organizing strong, productive groups (Managing, P. 1 – 25)

Fish Bowl: Red – Worksheet (Managing, p. 14)

Fish Bowl Blue: Developing goals of group building: apply to placement (Managing: p. 21)

SCENE:

Students in conversation outside the classroom, about the group work class.

NARRATOR: Cecilia indicates that she found herself involved in "someone else's discussion" about how the class was "supposed to be."

SCENE:

Inside the classroom space...

> VOICE OF CECILIA: As I moved into the second week, my feelings of hopelessness and confusion intensified. There was so much discouraging talk outside of the classroom and so much tension within the group that the entire purposes began to lose its meaning. Fortunately, soon after the class began that day we moved into group activity, one that turned out to be both an enlightening and self-validating experience. I was a member of the blue group, the first official group to perform and be observed. (Student narrative paper.)

NARRATOR: How in-classroom experience shapes a student's shift in perspective is captured:

> VOICE OF CECILIA: We discussed our sentiments and knowledge concerning group work. The red group sat on the outer skirts of the circle we had formed, and actively watched us during this process. However, my self-revelation did not occur until I was put in the position to observe the latter group in their discussion, which was to share their opinions, interpretations, and hunches about the dynamics of our sub-group. What I realized was that it was incredibly awkward for me to accept feedback from others if I did not have the opportunity to respond to their comments. I had never before acknowledged this as such an inner-struggle, perhaps because I had never been put in a position of this sort. However, the outcome of this event was a greater understanding of who I am as a group member and most importantly a person. Within a week I had already disproved my initial belief that there was nothing new to be gained from this class, for on this day, the 22 of January, I learned a valuable lesson about myself. (Student narrative paper).

Scene change:

In the evening of day two of the semester.

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: It felt like a good class today. ... I used a 'fish bowl' with the students observing the task, "What do we want to look like as a community of adult learners?" (Journal Entry, January 22, 1998, p. 2).*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: On the first day of classes, I had asked the students to consider the classroom situation as a learning community. However, I felt that this notion got lost in the classroom chaos. I explained to the students that I had embraced the idea of a harmonious adult learning environment addressing and integrating theoretical readings with the practice of experience of working together on these concepts in an actual learning community. Another student's narrative paper capturing her experience of the classroom suggests a range of emotions and openness to what might happened next in the semester:

> During our second session I was very focused, in hindsight, too much so. In looking back and reading through my journals, I have become a lot more self-aware. As a group member, I need to relax and let things flow naturally instead of being such an organized control freak. I didn't allow myself to have fun with the "fishbowl" experience; I was too worried about the task at hand with who was playing what role. I was impressed that the rules of feedback were accurately followed, every comment was worded positively and constructively, and there was no blaming.

The diversity among students' perceptions and understanding about how they saw one another, and interpreted my actions, is apparent:

> VOICE OF LEXIA: It always surprises me to hear how different people interpret certain actions or focus on certain dynamics in comparison to others. One example is how R was sitting, I noted his position, but I thought he was hunched over and leaning to the side because he was comfortable. Other people in the observing team saw his position as a lack of inclusion and an obvious disinterest. (Student narrative paper.)

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: The rules of feedback, a practice component of the subject matter that the students were introduced to in the first-semester subjects, also enters the dynamic interaction among people, things and processes in the classroom situation. Lexia's statement that there was "no blaming" indicates a historical dimension to the students' collective experience in the skill of giving and receiving feedback. Lexia's statement reveals the interconnection between the students' application of subject matter content to the evolving interpersonal relationships in the classroom. The subject matter is another component that shapes the interactive tensions at play in the life of the classroom. Further in the semester, another student's expression about feedback suggested a belief that their group work experience was subject-matter free, or kept outside the life experience in the classroom. This tension is captured in my journal:

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: She said, "We know all about giving feedback – but it's tiring." (Journal M Entry March 12, 1998, p. 30).*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: I attempted to build a bridge between the reading log assignment and communication in the classroom. It was my hope that the students would experience first-hand, the value of reading for the author's terms.

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: The students were in reading groups. I asked them to write down and discuss the questions the chapter addressed. My sense was that the exercise was helpful in reading analytically. A visit to one small group of students affirmed the usefulness of the reading log activity. "Its good that we're doing this," said one student. "I enjoyed today's class." The time flew. It was busy. The students were cooperative. I noticed Tasha; who told me at the beginning of the class that she would be leaving a half-hour early, stayed until the end. (Journal entry, January 22, 1998, p. 2).*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: It pleased me, and gave me a sense of personal satisfaction that the class captured Tasha's interest to the extent that she may have realized the value of staying for the whole experience.

* * *

Session Three
Jan. 28 / 29
Managing & developing strong groups (Managing, p. 32 – 44)
Fish Bowl: Blue – Exercise: Clear and Unclear Goals (one hr.)
Fish Bowls: Red – Red group gives Feedback to Blue group on dynamic within the process – 2 facilitators.

SCENE:

Classroom

CECILIA: I have always been an individual more concerned with the process of a group than the task to be completed. … Though I as well felt the pressure with all the uncertainty of what was expected of us, I wanted more than anything else to get on with our group-building. On January 28th, I finally had this opportunity placed in my hands. That afternoon, I facilitated a group in the discussion of goals we have for the class as a community of adult learners. (Student narrative paper.)

SCENE:

Classroom. Students in small groups

TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: *The students moved into three small groups. I asked for a facilitator to step forward in each group and for two observers to pull themselves out. I gave them a task. They were to come up with goals for their learning community ... (Journal Entry, January 29, 1998, p. 4).*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Reflecting on the above journal excerpt, I recall the busyness of the classroom. The class seemed to take on a workshop atmosphere.

VOICE OF LEXIA: During the third session, I took my hand at facilitating: I surprised myself by being in the first group of facilitators, and by doing it voluntarily. I felt particularly confident, which is very unusual for me, I understood the exercise and had completed the appropriate readings from the texts. The goals that our small groups came up with were actually the goals that became the goals of our entire group. Our goals that deal with making a conscious effort to better understand the class is quite interesting to reflect on. In every session I commented in the corresponding journal how it was nice and refreshing to work with different faces in each exercise. I feel that this goal was worked on in small groups, without even being recognized. I also realize that in order to attain a goal each person must, personally, make quite an effort in order to be successful as a group. In every one of my groups there was an "accelerated" student. By the end of our experience I no longer differentiated between the two subgroups that had existed, I only noted names, and only through analyzing my journals did I come up with this observation. (Student narrative paper.)

TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: *By the time I got around to all the rooms, the group process was in full swing. I stayed in each group for* *about 10 minutes, on the outside looking in. When the group had reconvened as a whole, I asked each group to share their goal sheets and to talk about the process in their individual groups. 'Motivation' and 'structure' were written on Cecilia's group goal sheet.*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: I had noticed that when Cecilia started the group task she asked the group members to identify 'key terms.'

SCENE:

Classroom. Large group discussion.

TEACHER: Please explain what you mean by 'motivation' and structure.'

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: She explained 'structure.' I asked another member in the group to explain the terms, and another, and another. Each time the group heard a different meaning. (Journal Entry: January 29, 1998, p. 5). I wanted the different understanding of the same terms to be highlighted. I felt I softened this constructive criticism with my telling them this happens in groups all the time. (Field note, January 29, 1998).

CECILIA: But we *did* accomplish the task. *We* know what the words meant!

SCENE:

After class in my office

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Cecilia told me that she had never worked with this group before.

CECILIA: They *aren't* my friends, or people I hang around with. I don't really know them. So I started with a focus on process.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: She also told me that if she had known she was going to have to share the outcome with the whole group, she would have gone about the task differently. (Field Note, January 29, 1998, p. 6).

I remember thinking that I wanted to grasp this teaching moment to try and shed light on the importance of listening carefully to one another. I also wanted to draw the parallel between the intent, and the transferability of the reading log assignment. Several students had suggested that the reading log was a "make work" activity. One student suggested to her peers that it be like building your own glossary of what you have read. I built on her explanation, adding the need to integrate the reading with her own experience in this group class. I was reminded of a colleague's comment about students at a recent promotion committee meeting: "Very few of the students integrate theory and knowledge." My colleague's comment seemed to resonate with the faculty sitting at the table. We shared our experiences of working with students who we saw as truly integrating theory and knowledge with experience.

I recall Cecilia's appearance. She appeared agitated and sounded defensive. I thought that she was young enough to have a mother who would be around my age and I considered the possibility of authority issues being gently played out between us. I wondered about her narrative and her life stories. I noticed that she wrote continuously in her journal during class time. Her handwriting seemed deliberate and perfect with each letter almost sculpted. She seldom raised her head, only when she spoke or when she was addressed.

Teacher Student Relationships – Outside-the-Classroom-Space

I also took some comfort in the individual visits Cecilia and Lexia and a few other students made to my office. In some cases, when I felt it was appropriate, I encouraged the women students who came to my office to bring their concerns to the class. The students seemed to have a strong need for acceptance by their peers. It became obvious that the students did not want to disappoint one another. Also evident, was the sense of powerlessness and a definite lack of safety in the classroom. The students who came to me seemed to be outside of their peer group.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Referring to her facilitation experience (and drawing on the course readings), Cecilia identified what she believed to be the needs of the group.

> VOICE OF CECILIA: In this dynamic I maintained an expressive role, one which was concerned with the feelings, involvement, and interaction between the members. I ensured that the inclusion needs of all participants were met, and in doing so, creating a validating and permissive atmosphere to flourish. There was a definite high degree of cohesiveness and respect among the group, two things that I hoped for within our larger community. (Student narrative paper)

SCENE:

On day three of the semester:

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: The reading log came up again, and three or four students asked me if I would look at them. I agreed to look at them during the break. A student who hadn't been to class yet asked about the reading log. She told the class that she doesn't learn well from textbooks, and it takes her ten times longer to understand a sentence. (Journal entry, January 22, 1998).*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: My journal echoed my concern about students placing themselves into small boxes or categories that defined their capabilities. I wanted to set the stage for these students to avoid thinking in little boxes. This notion speaks to my discomfort with the implementation of learning style inventories based on the developmental theories endorsed by much of adult education literature. I have seen time and time again students locking themselves into their scores and ratings on these tests. About the reading log…

TEACHER: Try it, and then we'll talk about it.

* * *

Gives, Gets and Concerns

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: So far, the journal entries that I have shared with the reader speak to how I feel about class beginnings. I had hoped the reading assignment for the semester and the grading criteria had been clarified in the first and second classes. In past beginnings, I spent time with the class about any concerns and questions they have about the assignments, grading criteria and how the semester will unfold. Once these discussions have taken place, I have been hopeful that we can move forward with building relationships with one another and the subject content. During this particular beginning, I did not embrace my usual formalized use of the *Gives, Gets and Concerns* exercise. However, by week four we returned to my old tradition, and outlined the exercise. I asked two students to take their turn at facilitating. I believe that I assumed, by the fourth semester, that my colleagues had already used the exercise and that the students had already grown tired of using it. Lexia suggests that I had been misled by my own assumption.

SCENE:

Classroom

> VOICE OF LEXIA: A large part of our experience as an adult learning community was confusion, initially over the "structure" of the course. In looking back, I can now see that it was a good learning experience in how to handle groups that don't run smoothly. Bev initiated exercises like "Gives, Gets and Concerns," goal setting, and making our own personal Coat of Arms, to help work through the chaos. It was interesting to see what we as a group were willing to give. My learning came in finding that some people weren't even willing to add to our lists, showing their lack of commitment, interest and motivation. It was also interesting to see that in some cases, the Gets far outweighed the Gives. (Student narrative paper.)

TEACHER/NARRATOR: So that everyone would have a record of the list, I took down the words that the facilitators wrote into the three categories on the chalkboard (see Figure 2).

Gives	Gets	Concerns
Respect to others regardless of feelings or views	Being able to lead groups effectively	Lack of depth
My perspective	Other's perspectives	Being motivated
Respect to what others have to say	Ideas	Conflict Resolution
Constructive feedback	Self awareness	Class Morale
Leadership skills	Constructive feedback	That everyone will get an opportunity to be a facilitator
Knowledge from life experience	What are the components?	That I will be able to remain consistently assertive with my thoughts and feelings.
Encouragement and support	Leadership skills	Caught up with tangents – side tracks
Non-judgmental	Be able to work effectively in groups	
Understanding and patience	Good analytical skills	
Support	my credit	
Presence	Confidence in leading groups	
Interest	Skills in group leading and observing	
	Confidence in groups	
	To gain understanding of interpersonal relationships and group process	
	Ability to lead groups and be comfortable with it	
	Better understanding of group dynamics and the skills essential to effective groups	
	Energy	
	Willing to learn	
	Open Mindedness	
	I will give my membership	
	Personal Experience	
	My voice ears?	
	Attention	
	Ideas	
	Confidentiality	

Figure 2. Gives, Gets and Concerns (February 5, 1998)

NARRATOR: About the Gives, Gets and Concerns exercise…

> VOICE OF LEXIA: When we were presented with the activity of formulating Gives, Gets and Concerns lists, I hoped that this might be the exercise that would increase the group's morale. For me, any contract I make to myself and with others is held in great regard, and I will do what ever it takes to ensure that I keep up my end of the bargain. I just prayed that the others felt the same. … This exercise was especially beneficial and essential for me because it encouraged me to sit and reflect on what my individual purpose was in this group. Over the past weeks I had only concerned myself with the exact purpose of the class, and had not given any consideration or thought for what I was doing as an individual member. Come completion of this exercise, I felt as though I possessed a greater sense of direction in the community, and I committed to doing what I could to improve the group's cohesiveness. (Student narrative paper.)

NARRATOR: About her concerns…

> VOICE OF LEXIA: My largest concern was being able to complete the assignments to Bev's standards, especially the reading log. When I couldn't clear up my confusions in class over the assignment, I decided not to be selfish and hold up the rest of the class and use our valuable time. (Student narrative paper.)

SCENE

CLASSROOM

TEACHER: I was determined not to give the students a pre-defined format. I gave suggestions - lots of them. But I wanted them to choose the system that worked best for them. I suggested they experiment with a variety of formats. My teacher thinking and how I thought I could be with these students is reflected:

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I say, "find a way that works for you," and this seems to frustrate some of them. I'm thinking especially of Cindy, Joan and Sheila. I saw Lexia's stress level. I spent some time with her and gave her some feedback on what she had written in her reading log so far.*

She seemed satisfied after showing me her work. (Journal entry, January 29, 1998, p. 4).

* * *

SCENE:

Teacher's Office

VOICE OF LEXIA: I visited Bev after class and within a few minutes, she had me right on track. I was grateful for her patience and understanding, it not only helped me. I shared my newfound understanding to help others in the class. With the reading logs under my belt, I was able to enjoy the group more and not be so distracted and uptight. (Student narrative paper.)

Session Four
Feb. 5 / 6
Experiment – Collecting group information (Assessing, p. 1 – 23)
Fish Bowl: Red – Findings – 2 facilitators
Fish Bowl: Blue – Findings – 2 facilitators

SCENE

Classroom - a few comments about the reading logs and the workload. Some angry faces too - Sheila for one, Robin for another. I started the session today by asking if they had any "unfinished business" from last week. No response. I asked if someone could summarize last week's session and bring everyone up to date. (Fieldnote, February 5, 1998)

TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: The person who spoke described the session as being about the students' confusion over the assignments. I could feel my own frustration. I had hoped to move on. I remember checking myself, and asked "did we not go over the course outline thoroughly?" I thought we did. (Journal entry, February, 5, 1998. p. 7.)

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: In spite of the complaints about the workload, and the various opinions about the value of the reading log, I did not alter the assignment.

SCENE

Another teacher's office A teacher conversation about my classroom experience:

TEACHER: Don't fall for that over-worked thing, because the course load is almost half of what it was in previous semesters. (Personal communication, February 5, 1998).

SCENE:

Journal writing

TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I sensed frustration among some students in the class about the reading log. I know that, for some people, to ask them to read and be responsible for their reading might be a new experience. I suggested to Mary to at least start the log, and then to bring it to me to look at, "This way we won't be discussing something in the abstract." (Journal entry, February 5, 1998, p. 8).

NARRATOR: Later in the evening I wrote again in my journal:

TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I know I did go over the course outline. Where is this self-doubt coming from? A student asked, "what is the structure of this class?" The question was clear enough, but her timing interested me. I felt that I was able to respond clearly and patiently, drawing her attention back to the course outline and the objectives of the course. (Journal entry, February 5, 1998, p.12-13).

NARRATOR: I included the following questions in my journal:

TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: What are the students seeing and feeling in this group theory and practice class? What are their stories? What stories did the students hold about community college? How did they come to be in this program? What brought each of them here? I am looking forward to reading their narrative papers. (Journal entry, February 5, 1998, p. 13).

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: What is the narrative history behind some of the students' opposition to this assignment? Some community college teachers suggest that students may not be accustomed to reading. How did these students come to be students in a two-year diploma program at a community college? My colleagues suggest that students may not be used to being accountable for their reading outside of studying for exams and tests.

I was asking the students to integrate the reading materials and their classroom group-work experience on a weekly basis. Perhaps the students are too busy to read. Is reading the problem, or is it sharing their thinking about the reading that the students are struggling with? Could it be that I am misinterpreting reading problems with learning difficulties?

What happens for the educator when students don't read or attend their classes? Other teachers in the faculty give tests as a way to ensure that the students read the material. Often, teachers in community college teaching and learning situations either give or take away grades for student attendance. In a 1999 unpublished community college study, other community college educators write their reactions to the temporal changes made to the teaching semester.

> "Students are hard-pressed to absorb information at the rate it must be delivered. Absences have catastrophic results."
>
> "There's not enough time for students to assimilate new material and develop and apply new/improved skills, especially in an area like English."
>
> "Very few students can read fast enough. "Growth time" is too short." (Ontario OPSEU, unpublished survey. 1999, p. 78)

I have, for the most part, been opposed to a relationship between grades and attendance and evaluation formulas that give or take students' grades. I thought that the reading log activity would address my concerns about getting students to read. The reading log assignment that I introduced to the students in the subject outline was an improvisation on an exercise that had enhanced my own reading skills. I felt confident that I had made the appropriate modifications. It was my hope the students would read the texts and that they would integrate their reading with the classroom activity. I asked them to write their responses to classroom activity in their journals. Since their journals were to inform their final narrative papers, I thought I had addressed my concerns about getting the students to come to class.

In spite of my intentions for the reading log assignment, my general sense was that many of the students came to class having not read the assigned readings. I believe that the direction this class took was partly grounded in this problem. I also sensed that some of the students came into this class thinking it was going to be like the group class they took in the second semester of the program. One colleague had taught the course using a 'T - group' format, and another embraced a personal therapeutic thread. While I endorse both of these approaches at the appropriate times, I wanted this experience to be different, and I was receiving a strong message that some of the students wanted it to resemble their past experience.

Tensions and Dissonance: Other Teachers Feel It Too

Out-of-classroom Space: A Teacher Conversation

In my journal I asked,

> *Could it be that I am misinterpreting discipline problems for reading difficulties?*

SCENE

Administration area waiting to meet with the department chair, in conversation with a teacher colleague. I learn that other teachers on the landscape also experience dissonance.

SANDRA: You look like you're waiting for the principal. Some things never change, do they?

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Waiting for the principal. Not something that happened to me as a kid. But with this notion, come images of being different from others, and not fitting in. I was considered to be a "good girl" - obedient, a pleasure to have in the class. This personal identity has continued to thread through my teaching and my life. My performance appraisals have been more than positive, to the point that I enfolded into my identity the idea that I am a 'good teacher.' With the notion of the 'good girl,' I'm reminded of its parameters: - keep your mouth shut and sit with your knees together, which really means discomfort, not to mention that it's bad for your spine; be polite, neat and tidy; and speak only when addressed. (Field Note, Oct. 2, 1998).

* * *

I wonder how many students in the class were like the good girl that I was in my youth. What is it like for them as 'good girls' to be in a class situation that is full of other people's tensions? Outside my administrator's office, Sandra and I discussed teaching, students, class size, and shared our current classroom challenges. Her voice echoed my experience. As we spoke, I felt less alone. I was reminded of the frequency of conversations such as this one with my past colleague when Christina and I car-pooled to and from work. Sandra told me that she hates her Thursday teaching day because it begins at two-thirty in the afternoon.

SANDRA: The students have been in classes all day, and twenty-five minutes before the end of the class, they're packing up to leave." With her voice full of feeling she said, "they don't care what I have to say" (Field note, Oct. 2, 1998).

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: I understood Sandra to mean that she cares desperately about the students and their learning. Sandra said she knows a number of teachers who are experiencing "the same kind of thing, and find themselves having to deal with behavioral problems."

SANDRA: I was a high school teacher before I came to teach at a college, and it feels like that experience all over again.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: After reconstructing the conversation I had with Sandra, I wonder if Sandra is blaming the students for their behaviour in the classroom. I wondered how these recent classroom experiences shape her professional identity. What sense does Sandra make of the narrative tensions that the students are bringing to her classroom?

SCENE

In the administration and teacher work area waiting my turn to use the photocopier.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: In contrast to my conversation with Sandra and the sense that our discussion brought to my teacher identity, I captured a very different teacher conversation in my field notes.

Two male colleagues had both been at the college since close to its inception in 1969. One teaches English Literature, and the other teaches a variety of psychology courses. Both have earned doctorate degrees. While waiting my turn at the photocopier, their open conversation provided me a glimpse into the classroom experience of these long-time educators. Mimicking his own behaviour, one teacher demonstrated to the other his use of a frequently used phrase in his classroom,

FIRST TEACHER: Hello! You there, this is not your living room.... Get your feet off of the desk.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Acknowledging him, the other teacher announced his response to students when they yawn in his class,

SECOND TEACHER: You! No yawning! Next time cover your mouth. You're out of here!

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Though these challenges experienced by my male colleagues in some ways paralleled those discussed with Sandra, I interpreted that there were vast differences in how the men and Sandra and I saw ourselves. We want to be in relationship with our students and unlike the men's top-down management of the classroom turbulence. Sandra assumed the students don't like her. Sandra's explanation resonated with the personal feelings stirred in me when I read a personal account from an early teaching journal to the class. When I looked up to see one student with her head on the table and her coat over her head (a story I tell later) a series of thoughts rushed through my mind. For one moment, I considered that my story was boring, perhaps too far a-field from the subject matter; perhaps I had crossed some sort of imaginary line. My immediate response was quite different to how I understood my male colleagues' response to their students. How does gender matter in the classroom? Permeating my story is Krieger's (1996) theoretical perspective:

> Throughout their lifetimes, both girls and women experience themselves as more open because they are more frequently invaded by others - female

> and male, both strangers and intimates. Female boundaries are more often invaded because women are viewed as accessible and manipulative, whereas men, because they are more respected, are treated as more separate and more inviolable (p. 172).

The male teachers in my story might consider the classroom situation a result of problems with undisciplined students. After the two male teachers departed, the conversation stayed alive in my own thinking, speaking to the general sense of chaos and the challenges in classroom teaching and teacher identity.

My brief encounter with Sandra felt like I had come across one of Mable Lake's breakwaters that I spoke about in chapter one. Though the conversation was brief, I was left feeling on the edge of something. The conversation was like a breakwater because it made me pause and wonder about the classroom. Perhaps I am imagining a breakwater as a place to rest and catch one's breath during a long, difficult swim. The breakwater creates a place of safety and momentary relief. Sandra's words stirred the seemingly still, blue surface that contains the discontent and bitter currents that are sometimes stirring below the surface of the classroom experience. Learning about the experiences of other teachers felt as though I discovered submerged rocks below the surface.

Tensions and dissonance are stirred in me as I tell and retell stories about students and my teaching life. For example, the feelings of melancholy that were stirred in me with the experience about Elba cheating and the events around the final exam provoked a sense of being on the edge of something. I wonder if teachers in the community college system are on the edge of knowing their students. I thought I knew Elba. I was certainly surprised by her actions. What more could I have done to understand Elba's life? I was even more taken aback by my own reaction, that I wasn't certain what to do, so I reacted intuitively and asked her to go and talk to the department chair. The department chair and the faculty sitting on the appeal committee understood from Elba that the index cards provided her a sense of security, - though, she claimed she did not actually use the cards during the exam. Though I supported the notion that Elba re-write the exam, I was displeased to learn that the department chair promoted Elba's final grade to the registrar after the deadline. Elba's story about cheating deepened the gap I felt between the stories of experience that administrators and teachers live.

In-Classroom Space

SCENE:

Journal writing...

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: The participation was low. J and M commented on this to the class. J pointed out that Nancy had to work hard for her marks. J pleaded to her classmates, "it's for her grade!" She seemed to be insinuating that her peers were not helpful in the process of Nancy's turn at facilitation. ... Frances seems to have good insights. She raised the point about the divisiveness in the class. She stated that it's unfortunate the people in the class don't really know one another. "People have stayed in their cliques," she said. She suggested there is strength in extending self and working with new people. (Journal M entry, February 5, 1998, p. 11)*

In my reconstruction of this journal entry, I wrote:

> *Frances seldom came to class. Her words were welcome, but there was no follow through. She told me about her demanding work schedule and her long drive to the college from the city's core. If she missed her car pool, there was little chance she would take the Go-bus. (Journal M entry, February 5, 1998, p. 11)*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Learning about life narratives of students may reveal what it is we need to know for teaching and learning with our students in the formal classroom environment. How are teachers in the community college system to have autonomous relationships with their students if they don't know them? How can teachers live in classrooms and learn from their students if they don't have an opportunity to know them? How can students come to know their teachers?

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I assumed that by semester four they knew one another. I came back new, too. ... Relationship building is needed – relationships within the group, getting to know one another. (Journal M entry, February 5, 1998, p. 12)*

TEACHER/RESEACHER/NARRATOR: I was reluctant to do any such activity, even though I earlier wrote in my journal:

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I think it [relationship-building] is essential. (Journal M Entry, February 5, 1998, p. 13).*

TEACHER/RESEACHER/NARRATOR: How did I come to let go of relationship-building in my classroom? What had shaped my decision? My journals revealed that I was experiencing the tensions of time created by the rhythms and unities embedded in the formal structures of the college.

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: It will be time-consuming – but it might make the learning experience in the long run, more enjoyable – for them and for me. So I need to think about a " getting to know you activity that is suitable for this point in the semester. (Journal M entry, February 5, 1998, p. 12)*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Echoes of my concerns about time also unveiled in other faculty member's statements (Ontario OPSEU unpublished survey, 1999, p. 82 -83).

> "Everything is rushed. Course content has been reduced."
>
> "No time, even for the basics "26 weeks per year replacing 36 weeks: 10 weeks of classes lost in the new form? How can programs be better"?
>
> "More pressures on everyone."
>
> "Fewer hours to deliver the same curriculum with fewer faculty means less time enhancements to the information and more stress on faculty and students"
> "The semester changes have introduced a more rigid mechanical, assembly-line element to the semester. The flow of the season has almost no part in learning now."

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: As a beginning teacher, I grounded my identity in my unquestioned acceptance of the adult education literature that was available to me. My response to the chaos and tensions lived out in this particular community college classroom reveal that I am, in some small sense, returning to the personal practical knowledge of my community based teaching situation. How the literature influenced and shapes my teacher identity is illustrated in how I directed and wanted the curriculum to unfold. The attempts I made to clarify the outline and orient the students to the experience were embedded in principal of adult learning that I read about in the literature. On the other hand, I was attempting to move with a subject outline that I designed without ever knowing this particular group of students. I was feeling stuck with having to abide by what I had subsequently designed and contracted with the college and the students. I felt concerned that if I shifted too broadly away from the subject outline, that the students would, at the most, rebel and, at the least, suggest that I was unorganized and therefore not a good teacher. I envisioned students complaining to the department chair about changes and adjustment to the course outline. I was concerned that the students would embrace any changes as a lack of structure in the curriculum. I also imagined disastrous and misunderstood responses on the *Key Performance Indicator* evaluation form.

In some respects, I feel supported by the adult education literature that I was introduced to at the inception of my post-secondary experience when Brundage and Mackeracher's (1980) resource materials were left behind in the office I inherited. Though, how can the literature support Sandra and me in the classroom with our students, when neither the college system nor the adult education theoretical discourse makes a concentrated effort at integrating the two?

Session Five
Feb. 12 / 13
Fish Bowl: Red; Fish Bowl: Red

SCENE

During class time on the continuum of the fifth session of the semester, the students in both of my sections spoke about not knowing one another. Some of the students seemed to be blaming the college.

STUDENT VOICE: The college has let us down a number of times. (Field note, February 13, 1998.).

* * *

TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I wonder if the students consider their role in this?

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: One morning I planned to integrate an activity that I hoped would allow the students to get to know one another as they requested. I drove to the campus extra early to set up the classroom. I set up the video camera and gave two students who, I thought I could trust my plans for the session. I asked them to explain to the class that I had to attend a funeral.

Feb. 12, 1998

Dear Facilitators,

First of all, thanks for agreeing to facilitate. I hope you have some fun with it. I have outlined some pointers that may assist you in your role as facilitator:

(1) Familiarize your self with the contents of the letter that I addressed to all of the students so that you can speak to it if necessary. **(2)** You might even read it out loud, inviting the class to follow along as they read their own copy. It's up to you. **(3)** Go over the goals of the group activity with the class.

(4) The objective of the lesson plan is to give each person in the learning community an opportunity to share their personal Coat of Arms with their peers. The Coat of Arms is a "classic" group activity. **(5)** Some people may have done it before; encourage them to engage in the activity anyway. They are likely to have a different experience, because we are a different group, in a different time.

(6) Give the group 20 minutes to draw and fill out their Coat of Arms on a large piece of flip-chart paper. Time-keeping is important. **(7)** Each person should take a turn to present their Coat of Arms. **(8)** Do not allow any questions, comments or cross-talk at this time. **(8a)** Ask your peers to write down their thoughts, feelings, and questions, and save them for the next class. **(8b)** They will have a chance to voice their response in the next class (Feb. 19).

(9) At last count, there were 27 people in the class, including each of you and the camera-person. It each student takes 15 – 20 min. for preparation; that leaves about 140 minutes. Give the students a 10-minute break; that leaves 130 minutes. If people take 5 minutes to share their Coat of Arms, you will have 5 minutes to wrap up.

(11) Ask each person to bring their Coat of Arms and their questions to class next time because it will be the focus of the class. Remind people to write down what they heard and felt, so that they can draw on their notes in part two of the activity.

Feb. 12, 1998

Dear Learning Community (Thursday Division Students)

I had to attend a funeral at 11 am today. I don't know for certain if I will make it back, but I will make every attempt to. As a way of "being there," and at the same time, allowing "the show to go on," I will outline my intended structure for the class.

1. I suggest that two people take the opportunity to facilitate the entire lesson plan. This may be decided by the time you read this letter. If not, you decide.

2. At least one other person will take on the tasks of camera-person. You might want to divide up the task of video-taping.

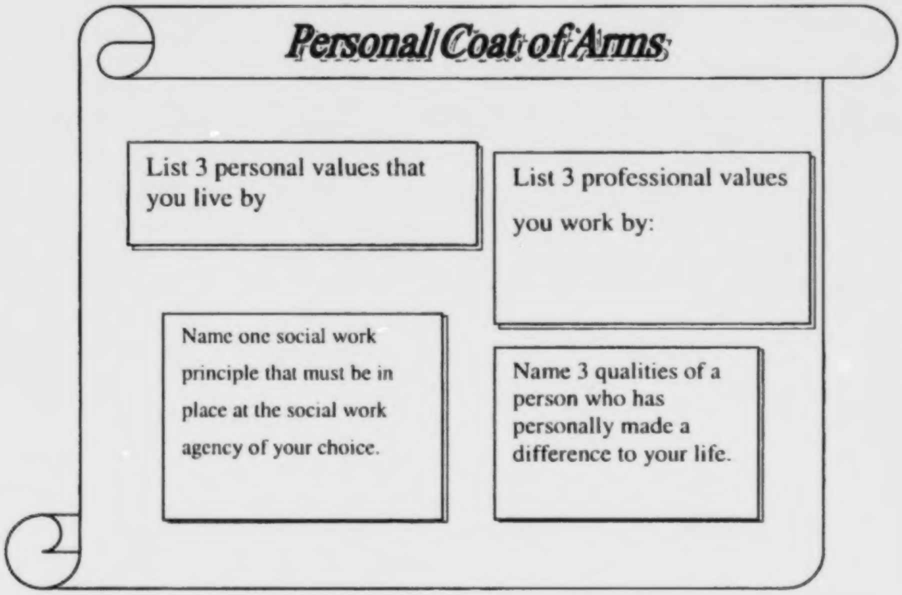
3. The entire class should be taped... from start to end... even start taping now as you read this letter.

4. One of the facilitators will put the tape(s) in my mail box, and I will watch them before the next class, because I too want get to know each of you, and I will be able to participate fully in the next class.

5. The lesson plan will take the entire class period, and is Part One of my overall objective for the growth and development of our learning community. This specific lesson, which may be familiar to some of you, could be a beginning response to one of the group goals set last week: Getting to know one another and being inclusive.

See you in class,
Thanks,

Bev Brewer



List 3 personal values that you live by

List 3 professional values you work by:

Name one social work principle that must be in place at the social work agency of your choice.

Name 3 qualities of a person who has personally made a difference to your life.

Figure 3. Personal Coat of Arms

After the morning funeral, I arrived at the campus to teach my afternoon class. I also retrieved the video so that I could view it before the next class.

Watching the video, I sensed that something was 'off', though I wasn't sure what. Viewing, I watched the two women who agreed to facilitate and pass on my message to the class. They explained the task. One woman held a large piece of flip-chart paper up with the shape of a Coat of Arms on it. What the video captured was a classroom that was more quiet than usual. Following my suggestion, the facilitators directed their peers to answer each one of the questions embedded in the Coat of Arms, and then share their answers with the class. One student managed the camera, and captured each student's explanation on the videotape.

Lucielle wrote about the Coat of Arms exercise in her narrative assignment paper:

> VOICE OF LUCIELLE: In my journal, I recalled one occasion when the teacher was away, and two classmates facilitated the group. … During the class we had to work on a Coat of Arms that represented us. We had to include the people that most influenced us in our lives and why. I put my daughters and my best friend and partner. My daughters because of their unconditional love and

> my partner because of his ability to be non-judgmental and accepting of others. These are all qualities I admire in them. (Student narrative paper.)

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: From the video, I saw that Lucielle was the first person to share her Coat of Arms. She spoke quickly and with an even voice. When she stopped talking, one of the facilitators thanked her and invited the student sitting to her right to share her Coat of Arms. All but one of the students in attendance spoke to their Coat of Arms. From watching the video, I did not have a clear understanding how it was decided who would operate the camera, or if there were any discussion about the value of every person in the group having the opportunity to share their Coat of Arms. From the following student narrative paper, I gained further understanding about how the morning and the Coat of Arms activity went.

* * *

> VOICE OF LEXIA: A new dynamic that was added to our experience was videotaping one of our sessions together. Bev was absent, unexpectedly at a funeral. She had pre-arranged for R and K to co-facilitate, unbeknownst to the rest of us. Videotaping adds many different dynamics to the group, including a change in comfort level, natural actions, reactions, contributions, and overall behaviour. I got used to being taped and felt that I carried on as usual, forgetting the recorder was even there, but it did effect the group as a whole. (Student narrative paper).

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: A student's narrative paper reveals why one student came to be behind the camera and the impact on the group:

> VOICE OF LEXIA: T taped the class because she didn't want to be seen on the video. This shaped how the viewer saw the group. Our assignment was to construct and share our own personal Coat of Arms. I found this assignment challenging to complete in such a short period of time. (Student's narrative paper).

NARRATOR: Another student wrote:

> VOICE OF CECILIA: I was in absolute awe listening to the mottoes of my peers. This assignment provided small windows into the lives and morals of the participants, if they were willing to risk it. (Student narrative)

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: The rhythms and temporal conditions of a college semester set parameters, both positive and negative, on the learning experience. One student identifies a shaping temporal dimension:

> VOICE OF LEXIA: One drawback of the assignment was that Bev had asked that we save our feedback for the following session. I feel this was less effective. By the time the next class came the mood had left, the moment passed. K, as facilitator, did initiate that we could clap in appreciation, instead of giving verbal feedback. This was better than nothing was. (Student narrative paper).

NARRATOR: Another student wrote:

> VOICE OF CECILIA: I was awarded the opportunity to become involved in the dynamic activity called the Coat of Arms, and it was one of the greatest group building exercises. Not only did it encourage me to sit and reflect on the values, principles, and qualities that are essential to me in life, bit it also gave me the opportunity to get in touch with the rest of my community. (Student narrative paper.)

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: From viewing the videotape, I observed that the students applauded after the facilitators thanked each student. The student operating the camera did not share her assignment with the group. I also noted that the students completed and shared the Coat of Arms assignment in less than one hour. After viewing the videotape I wrote in my journal:

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: The students finished the class by break. When I used to use this exercise with my classes, the activity could go on for days.*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: In her writing about the Coat of Arms exercise, Lucielle highlights how the values of others shape her experience…

> VOICE OF LUCIELLE: Later on I was abashed to realize that my cynical attitude was displaying none of these characteristics that I admired most. I also put in the Coat of Arms, that one of the agencies that I could not work for would be one that is influenced by religion. (Student's narrative paper.)

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: The content that she wrote on her Coat of Arms was shaped by her knowledge of another student in the class. A personal dimension of Lucielle's experience as it rubs up against the narrative of another student in the class is apparent in her paper:

> VOICE OF LUCIELLE: Here comes another confession. I included this because there was a class member that I knew was heavily involved in a religiously affiliated agency. In a previous class, this student revealed this and other type of convictions that she had about these "God fearing" institutions and abortion rights of women. This hit a nerve with me, and felt that even though her comments were not directed at me, they were none the less hurtful. I had two abortions in my life… One particular girl (I don't like using the term girl unless I feel they are not quite women, which is a whole different essay), was relaying to us how she hoped to work in a social work environment that would allow her to help people and contribute to the world. I nearly laughed out loud. (Student narrative paper.)

* * *

In Act One, the first five sessions of the 1998 group work course has been storied. My narrative of experience and a story of colliding belief systems, expectations and tensions as lived by the teacher and the students, unfolded in this portion of the semester story of the group work classroom. Tensions transpiring from student reaction had its inception in the teacher's past experience and the shared experience on the first day of class. The classroom experience and how a few students responded to assignments and the weighting of grades shaped class sessions that followed. While there were only three or four students whose feelings and opinions were brought forward, the life narratives and the narrative of student relationships intersected further shaping the classroom milieu and the experience.

Among my own varying responses to the dynamic and interconnecting nature of the classroom sessions was the sense of an impending collision. My journal entries for the first few classes reveal my thoughts about the possibility that all could go wrong. Then there was a shift. Both my journal entries and the above-noted student statements suggest a shift in the dynamic interaction between what was happening in the classroom and what I had planned. I felt encouraged and hopeful that my intentions for the first class had been salvaged, though they were very slow in coming.

Since situations have a future, the tension in the first class did not remain static, and the tensions moved further into the semester's classroom activity. As my co-participants' narratives and tensions revealed themselves, and as the students' curriculum pushed further into the future, their old stories about themselves, their peers, group work and one another began to unravel. The stories that students told themselves about classroom relationships and group work were reshaped, so those new stories needed to be told. My story of the 1998 classroom experience continues in Act Two.

Chapter Six B

Act Two

Midway Evaluation

Session Six
Feb. 19 / 20: Fish Bowl: Blue: Fish Bowl: Red
Split Group: Midway Evaluation – group development

Scene

Following my own tradition, I included an opportunity for the students to evaluate their classroom experience half-way through the semester. I asked the group to consider two questions: Where are we as a group, and where we need to go next? The students divided themselves using an imaginary line down the centre of the room. It so happened the class divided itself into two groups that consisted of accelerated students on one side of the room and non-accelerated students on the other.

LEXIA: On February 19, 1998, we had the task of completing a mid-term assessment of our progress: where we were, how we were doing and where we were going. The class split into two groups to tackle these questions, the groups would later be labeled "functional" and "dysfunctional," and I was a member of the latter.

CECILIA: I felt so angry because I knew deep down that our group was not a dysfunctional one and we did in fact care for one another's learning. Yet something was preventing us from showing this to one another inside the classroom. And as the tension rose, our cohesiveness plummeted further.

NARRATOR: Pointing to the text,

TEACHER: If a group can not agree on goals, the group will be dysfunctional.

Perhaps we were unable to obtain goals because there were a number of agendas. (Journal entry, February 19, 1998, p. 23).

CECILIA: Looking back now, I am left to wonder whether my lack of faith in the community was in direct correlation with my inability to trust the group's commitment.

LEXIA: This group was out of control. We were sitting in an "L" shape, speaking all at once and being totally unsupportive. I heard and contributed many valid points, which went unnoticed.

CECILIA: I am constantly struggling with my excessive need of always wanting to "quick fix" a problem. Though I have come some distances over these past two years, occasionally I still catch myself attempting to do this. I am always trying to keep up the morale in any situation, and I will go to any length to protect and defend anything that seems inferential.

LEXIA: I felt partial responsibility. Half way through the process I withdrew my attention, and the group was running in the wrong direction. I should have tried to pull things together.

CECILIA: The "band aid" approach may actually make it worse. This was one of the biggest mistakes I made in the adult learning community. I was not willing to accept the fact that our group was somewhat dysfunctional, and instead protested any negative comment that was directed toward our process. In doing so, I prevented myself from identifying what the problem was in the group.

Submerged Rocks Revealed

LEXIA: When we evaluated our stage of development, as a large group, I felt it was shamefully low, averaging at the adolescent level. One positive that came out of this session, for me, was a realization that I must invest more of myself and try harder if I expect things to change.

CECILIA: On February 19th I did just this, and protested a comment that was made by our professor simply because it seemed negative and detrimental. Her statement was that she was unsure as to whether or not we all really liked each other, and suggested that we re-evaluate what cohesiveness means to us. At the time I was completely offended, and wondered how she could possibly make

> this comment having only known us for six short weeks out of our two-year career together. The mistake I made that day was defending the group on the basis of how we were outside of class, rather than on what she perceived us to be within this learning community. Again my one-sided attitude had made its way into my process, for I had failed to view the situation from both angles. … As I've said, sometimes I am so eager to maintain all that seems enabling that I completely disregard what actually is happening. Upon reflection, it is evident to me that my "hero-saving" behaviours that day, was actually a means whereby I could protect myself from the saddening truth. … Our group as I knew it was falling apart.

Session Seven

March. 12 / 13

Split Group with jig-saw: Organizing an intervention (Gold: p. 1-26)

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: The classroom stories of relationship that unfold during the sixth and seventh class session are complex. The tensions that came to the surface and revealed themselves shaped the curriculum and my thesis research journey. The students returned to the classroom after a two-week retreat from the college. Since our last session together, students worked at their field placement agencies for one week, which was followed by the March break week.

SCENE

Classroom. Adhering to the subject outline, I wrote the agenda on the chalkboard.

1. Follow-up
2. Jigsaw
3. Interventions
4. The Narratives

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I was hoping to focus on the task of setting up a group intervention. The discussion began with Lana's comment. She was interested in a statement I made last class [three weeks ago] about not being sure if the people in the room even liked one*

> *another. Angie agreed and said that she was also interested in this comment. (Journal entry: March 12, 1998, p. 19).*

Reflecting back on these comments I wrote:

> *I could have been clearer when I made this statement. The small group on the right, which was the one that Angie and Lana were in, seemed to work industriously, and in harmony. My statement did not address this group. I sensed that the students in this group respected each other and the task at hand. They were a "working group" in my eyes. When I made the statement, that I wasn't sure the people in the room really liked one another, I was actually responding to the group on the left-hand side of the room. (Journal entry, March 12, 1998, p. 19).*

About myself, I wrote:

> *Perhaps I just was not feeling strong enough to say directly to the group on the left that it was from within their dynamic that my comment was grounded. I did not want to point fingers. Under what circumstances, teacher, do I as a teacher feel that I am on strong enough ground that I can say what I am really thinking? (Journal Entry: March 12, 1998, p. 19 - 20).*

SCENE:

Challenging my uncertainty about the students liking one another, from the left side of the classroom...

CECILIA: We do really like one another we care about one another.

* * *

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I playfully responded to her comment, unfairly perhaps, that she was seeing the world through rose-coloured glasses. I don't think that the comment went over very well. My response to Cecilia was partly imbedded in my knowing that she was on painkillers for her dental surgery, though I didn't disclose this to the class. I felt at the time that I had been misunderstood, not by Cecilia, but perhaps by some of the other students who did not know the state of her health. At the time, I believe that I considered my clumsiness in terms of a dancer who*

> *trips. She picks up, and moves on, except my situation didn't feel as graceful as Swan Lake, or how I envision dance as eloquent, agile and flowing. (Journal M Entry, March 12, 1998, p. 19)*

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: When I tell, retell and reconstruct this story, the temporal and rhythmic qualities of the teaching researching dialectic in the classroom semester become apparent. This classroom moment felt so very important that I captured it in my memory as if I had a video camera in my mind's eye. Cecilia also captured these moments in her journal as indicated in her narrative paper. My personal practice knowledge grounded in teaching and learning with students in the subject matter of group work provided me with significant insight, and, in some ways, a sense of relief that this class had perhaps become unstuck. The tension created by one student's mindfulness to my stated observation of the group dynamic among the students was pivotal to movement in the curriculum. At the same time, I recall that my flippant comment was embedded in the budding relationship that I desired to replicate based on some of my previous adult learning relationships in group work classes.

Until this time, in my teaching and with my students I was always determined to break through what I interpret as resistance. In past descriptions of my teaching self to others, I have heard myself say that I don't ask for resistance to go away, I work with it. My preparation for this group work course was similar to how I was determined to allow the realities of group work and community experience to happen in this class. I began the semester thinking about this course as being twelve weeks away from the students' employment in the helping profession community and I wanted to challenge the students to meet that objective.

Another reality was, as I looked at some of my students, I wondered about their employability in the social services field. These students will be working with vulnerable and sometimes difficult target populations. I wonder about their awareness. My students will graduate with a community college diploma and will be in the position of competing for jobs for which graduates of a Masters of Social Work (MSW) and Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) will also be competing.

Sometimes, I feel uncomfortable about the futures of some of my students and the role the two-year diploma helping profession curriculum plays. I wonder if my students at times feel as though they have been invited into a trap. When discussing her feminist classroom, Krieger (1996) writes about a pitfall in these terms:

> We each, perhaps, have our occasions to feel such pain, to feel caught in a trap with no way out and for which we feel responsible. In my own case, the trap is clearly particularly female, full of feelings of unworthiness" (Krieger, 1996, p. 188).

When I first reconstructed the meaning of my classroom experience with this particular group of students, I didn't consider the luxury of feeling my trap was about gender issues. On further reflection, I reminded myself that the social service world of work is predominately a women's world. For many of the students in this program, they will enter into helping profession jobs that are not permanent full-time positions. Often times, in the helping profession sector for students with community college education, salaries are not competitive. Many students graduating from this program will enter into shift and weekend work, which poses challenges for women who, are mothers, and sometimes single, with young children. Perhaps the undercurrent of Kreiger's thinking lies beneath some of the student anger that was lived out in the classroom experience so close to the end of the semester.

* * *

Scene Change

Students reconvened into the large group formation. Students sat behind the tables that were arranged in a large square.

VOICE OF LEXIA: We had a class experience like none other before. It was an afternoon of self-disclosure, where everyone in class, even those that usually do not speak out at all, shared their sentiments. I was so relieved.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: As we went around the room and each student shared, I learned that the videotaped class had not taken place exactly as I was led to believe from watching the video, reading the facilitator's reports, and class dialogue. It was revealed during this sharing session, that the videotape had been turned off when things were said that the students didn't want me to know.

> LEXIA: … And the eggs finally broke. We began speaking about the operation of the two groups from our previous session and possible reasons for their levels of functioning. We then moved into a lot u self-disclosure from fellow group members on the issue of "safety" and its contributing effects on the group and participation. This disclosure opened the door to a very effective class.

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: One week after this same class, a student who had been absent visited me in my office. I captured her words in a field note:

> STUDENT: I heard about the class. I wasn't there, and even if I was… well you know what I'm like. I'm quiet. I don't like groups. So I don't speak. It's the same students in every class. It's like they don't want to do the work so they cause trouble. (March 12, 1998, p.41).

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRTOR: After the break, I handed out a worksheet (Appendix B) that I had prepared as part of my intention to focus on the subject matter topic, which was intervention.

I knew that some of the students had not purchased the texts. From our discussions in the class, and the silences, I guessed that the majority of the students were not reading the required course readings. The lack of attention to the readings partially shaped the classroom experience. The lived tensions also seemed to be imbedded in the contradictory messages and varying opinions among some of the students. Some students were of the opinion that relationships mattered. Others agreed that individuals in the class "really cared about one another." It was often difficult for me to accept this as so. The narrative threads embedded in some students' statements also rubbed up against my personal narrative. I considered the eye rolling I observed and the whispers I heard, and the seemingly lack of commitment to the group's process as disrespect and uncaring. Lexia captured some of the tensions living out in the classroom relationships among a small group of students.

> LEXIA: We studied intervention techniques in the readings. Bev used the college's union negotiations as an example, and we broke into groups to develop one for our learning community. I joined M, C and T: I have never worked with

them before and thought it would be a nice change. M recorded, and she and C and I actively contributed and brainstormed ideas and answers. I become very frustrated with T, I couldn't handle her lack of interest and her outright disrespect, her constant off topic conversations and questions [that] were inappropriate. I found that not only was she being unproductive but also she was capturing the attention and time of the whole group, bringing us off task. None of us confronted T, I think maybe because it would interfere with friendship, or maybe they didn't mind. I didn't want to speak up. … I was the one who didn't fit in… (Student narrative paper.)

NARRATOR: Contemplating her group's struggle, and thinking about her personal goals…

LEXIA: One of my long-standing personal goals is to develop my self-confidence, with this intact I could feel comfortable with confronting individuals and assuming the facilitator role, when necessary. I found the assignment to be quite challenging, I understood and realized that an intervention was warranted, but I felt that we didn't have enough time to implement one. The time restrictions we face due to being a college-run program have probably been one of the largest drawbacks to our process. The session ended and I wondered if our groups would even commit to an intervention if we did have time, I guessed that we'd talk about that next class. (Student narrative paper.)

* * *

SCENE CHANGE

In the evening of the turbulent session, I wrote in my journal:

TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: Nan is a strong group member.

SCENE

In the classroom.

Nan wrote 'group morale' on the flip chart and elaborated on it. She talked about attendance and made the point to her peers that everyone is important enough to be in the group.

NAN: Attendance matters!

* * *

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I noted Angie getting defensive - she had missed the first three weeks of classes. (March 12, 1998, p. 36).*

* * *

Scene change:

One day later...

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Nan sought me out the morning after yesterday's turbulent session. She stood outside the door of my classroom, and at break time poked her head in the door. She said, "I just wanted to say hi." I invited her into the classroom and asked her how she was feeling after yesterday's class. She told me that she felt good about what she did. She felt she had had taken a risk. After she left, I captured her words in a field note:

> NAN: I thought at first I should be faithful to my friends. I felt trapped. The younger students are used to having it nice and comfortable, and life isn't like that. Maybe there will be repercussions, but I felt good about what I said." (Field note, March 12, 1998, p. 36).

Session 8

March 19 / 20: Split Group: Different types of groups and facilitation

Among the classroom tensions at the semester's midway point and adhering to another one of my teaching traditions, I revisited the main assignment, which in this case was the narrative paper. I had hoped to attend to this personal teaching tradition last week for the purpose of clarification in the last class, but our group process took off in another, much-needed direction.

Re-visiting the Narrative Assignment

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: I then started to talk to the students about their narrative assignments. I told the students that I was going to tape the explanation because I wanted to make sure that I covered everything. I caught what I took as a "knowing glance" from Nan.

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I was remembering one student who early on in the process had accused me of explaining the reading logs*

> *differently every time, confusing her. So this time I was going to hear myself – and, I thought the tape could be useful for my research. I know that I was also thinking about appeals. If any student appealed, I could revisit the explanation of the assignment. (Journal entry, March 20, p. 38)*

SCENE

In the classroom...

Instructions on the Narrative

I've asked you to write about your personal experience. ...
A narrative is written in the first person. So you will saying "I, me, my"... For some of you that might be a strange way to write, ... most of us were trained to write in the third person.... You must write in the first person. That way you are writing about yourself and your experience.

... A good way of preparing for your narrative is to draw a lifeline.
[Demonstrating on the chalkboard], or a chronology of your experience in class. So you could take the course outline, and put them in a column, with the events that happened for you on each of these days. [Demonstrating on the chalkboard.]. ... You might find yourself writing stories about the events that came up. Look at what events came up and which ones were the most meaningful. ... You will see your own experience on a continuum. [Pointing to illustrations on the chalkboard.] You don't have to use either of these approaches. It's up to you. .... Another way of saying what a narrative is, to say that it is a story of your experience.

[Answering a question]. ... It will be about your reactions, and your learning, and maybe you write about buttons that got pushed during the experience. With a narrative you certainly begin to see patterns in your behaviour, your learning, and who you are in this group.... By the time you finish writing it, you will have a sense of your experience from beginning to end, on a continuum, in this class.

[Responding to a student]... that's a good point. When a person does narrative work they are thinking about the past. By past, for our purposes, I mean from the first day we worked together, ... For your narrative think about the past, the present, and your future. You, as a

budding helping professional and your future with group work....
(excerpt from transcript)

*   *   *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: When I reviewed the requirements and evaluation criteria for the narrative assignment, the classroom felt quite different from how it felt on day one of classes when I first introduced the students to the subject outline. My journal captures an aspect of the classroom milieu:

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: As I explained, the class was quiet. Some people were taking notes. ...I read some of my own personal experience writing as an example of narrative. (Journal M entry, March 20, 1998, p. 49).*

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATIVE: The silence in the room felt like a "working silence." The students appeared to be thinking and focused.

> *TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: I felt optimistic about this class today. The lesson plan that I took into yesterday's class appeared to make in-roads into understanding the nature of this group's process. (March 22, 1998 reflection on Friday March 20. Journal I entry, p. 55)*

*   *   *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: To assist me in my explanation of the narrative assignment, I provided the students with an example of my own personal writing. The personal writing that I chose to share was a story about my own apprenticeship and the relationship with Brenda and Catharine. I have also told this story in Chapter One of my thesis. I thought that the students might relate to a story about my apprenticeship experience working with clients who were quite volatile. The situation I wrote about was my beginning and entry level experience into group work with clients. I seldom read to students, and this was the first time I had read my own personal writing to a group of students. As I read, I heard whispers and a stir in the room. How some of the students responded, and how their behaviours shaped my teacher response is captured in the following journal excerpt:

TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: When I looked up, some people were putting their coats on. One woman had her head on the desk with her coat over her head. I felt a flash of embarrassment. I finished reading.

TEACHER: I see it's time to go. Think about your narrative, and bring any questions you have to class next week. (Journal M entry, March 22, 1998, p. 23).

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: I know now that I let Robin's behaviour shape my decision to stop reading. I felt that I had crossed a boundary. I felt humiliated. I felt vulnerable. I thought about the contrasts between this situation, past teaching experiences, and my personal learning situation with my own peers and professors

SCENE:

As students were leaving the
classroom, one student approached the teacher, who was
gathering together her materials...

DENNIS: Thank you for sharing that.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: I recall that I could feel myself looking at him from the side of my face, waiting for his next comment. In my experience, Dennis approaches, as if to seduce, and then lodges a complaint. So I waited, feeling guarded, not turning fully around.

DENNIS: those two women were really important to you.

TEACHER: Yes. They were my mentors for a long time.

DENNIS: Sounds like it. (Journal M entry, March 22, 1998, p. 23).

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: The image within this memory plays out like a small vignette in my mind. I see myself missing a moment in time when I could have engaged a student a little longer, and perhaps begun to develop a sense of rapport between us. Instead, I responded out of vulnerability. I feared or distrusted something based on past experience with him. It was the class before Easter weekend, more than half way though the semester and it felt as though no bridges or connections had been built between the students and myself in the class. What was I expecting from the students? And from where did these expectations come?

The students' narrative writing about their group work experience was the very place I thought some of these students' futures would be. I pictured the students working in and running groups in church basements and community halls. Many helping profession community college graduates have opportunities to work as adult educators in the informal sense. Throughout the beginning period of my teaching career when I worked in community based programs housed in church basements and post office buildings, I embraced teaching and learning in groups.

The first eight years of my teaching were influenced by theorists Carl Rogers (1969), Robert Carkhuff (1983), and the specific curriculum and research project funded by the then, Canada Employment and Immigration Commission that came out of Saskatchewan's Newstart program. I believe that my first eight years of teaching in the context as described in chapters one and two of this thesis explains how I came to expect certain life skills and social graces to be present in the classroom. (Among the students I first worked with in the context of a program that embraced group work, and individualized learning paths in computers, math, English and science, students with challenging and impoverished life histories, was commonplace.) In the context of a life skills learning environment (which was supported by a counselling framework), when the students life issues often played out in the learning environment, I felt supported as a teacher.

How my experience of structure worked with students in the past was not necessarily meeting the needs of some of the students in this group work class. For the students in my class who said the experience lacked structure, what are their school stories of structure? My story of structure embraced the professional term, *life skills coach*, and was used to capture the content and methodology of the life skills model. In my mind, this caught the differentiation between traditional and atypical learning environments.

The Life Skills course uses two truisms as the source of its methodology: first, learning starts at the learner's current level of functioning and his or her understanding of present reality and, second, the attainment of long-range goals requires the mastery of many specific intervening goals, whose integration by the individual leads to an apparent and significant behavioural change (Newstart Training Research and Development Station, 1974, p. 2) As outlined earlier, life skills are defined as:

> Problem-solving behaviours appropriately and responsibly used into the management of personal affairs. As problem solving behaviours, life skills liberate in a way, since they include a relatively small class of behaviours usable in many life situations. Appropriate use requires an individual to adapt the behaviours to time and place. Responsible use requires maturity, and accountability. And as behaviours used in the management of personal affairs, the life skills apply to five areas of life responsibility identified as self, family, leisure, community and job (1974, p. 1).

When I was teaching in the context of a life skills teaching and learning environment, the term *student* was used to describe participants. My colleagues and I encouraged and invited a diverse student population into the learning environment. Many of the students had families of their own; others had already raised their own children and had grandchildren of their own. Some of the other students previously held full-time jobs for lengthy periods of time, and were laid off due to plant closures. Mark, who remembered the picnic so well, was one of these students. Others were early school-leavers and had been at least one year out of the formal school environment. All of the students were referred to the program and participated in a one-hour interview with either my colleague or myself. To gain a sense of awareness about the individual's suitability to the program, the individual was obligated to participate in an intake interview. Here, we had an opportunity to establish rapport as we went over the person's application form. The individual was encouraged to decide if the program could meet their learning needs.

In my shift from what was then called the Occupational Developmental Division of the college into the post-secondary area, my teaching practices came to be shaped by Malcolm Knowles' notion of self-directed learning. Like many of my colleagues in the community based programs in the college, I embraced the notion of collaborative learning and introduced the learners to the competencies necessary to move along the continuum of teacher-directed learning to self-directed learning. I incorporated aspects of Allen Tough's (1971) *Learning Projects*, and Knowles' (1975) *Peer Resource Groups, Learning Plans* and *Contract Learning* into my curriculum. I introduced the students to the *Principles of Adult Learning* (PAL) as prescribed by Brundage and Mackeracher (1980) and these became the guiding principles in the classroom, especially in light of the complementary nature of these principles to the principles of social work (Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi, 1991). For a number of years, the teaching and learning experience contained within this specific course, Principles of Adult Learning, was considered the "hub" of the Helping Profession program and the students' preparation for their field practicums and future employment in the field of social work.

The terms *student* and *adult learner* came to be used interchangeably by me to describe the men and women in the learning process when I shifted from the community based and federally sponsored programs into the post-secondary division of the college. The target population in the post-secondary program included a broad range; I experienced a mixture of students, some entering directly from high school and others who were returning to school from employment. I was hired specifically to supervise helping profession students in the field, and to teach group work courses, as well as a course entitled, Principles of Adult Learning.

With confidence in my personal practical knowledge in group work, I felt puzzled about feeling embarrassed enough by one student's behaviour, to have missed an opportunity to use my own narrative in the way that I hoped. In my reconstruction of my own reaction to this teaching and learning experience, I realize that I resisted doing acquaintance *relationship-building* activities. I saw getting-to-know-you activities as something that should have happened in the students' first group work course experience and their previous semesters. It was as if I had moved away from my personal and professional knowledge about teaching and learning. From my personal practical knowledge, I understand relationship to be at the basis of all of the work I do with my students.

My journal reveals that:

> *Two students agreed with one another that they don't talk in this class, and that they aren't like this in their other classes. One student said that she feels "dissected and probed."...*

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: When I re-read my journal, it struck me that learning is not always comfortable. Learning is emotional.

SCENE

During a discussion among the students in the classroom…

MARIA: You can't just say something and leave it."

TESS: We know all about giving feedback, but it's tiring*!*

From across the room…

LESLIE: In our other classes, participation isn't called for. Those classes are structured and content based. (Journal entry, March 22, 1998. p. 23).

* * *

Learning as I have come to understand it in my teaching and learning situations is relational. Feelings of discomfort seep in when we think we know, or when a certain habit we have lived with is challenged.

> TEACHER JOURNAL VOICE: *I wasn't taking this personally even though I know that I push the envelope, seek a rough edge in what happens in the classroom. I probably do that because my teachers have done it with me, and that's how I learn.*
>
> *As the teacher, I have been in this place before. It's hell sometimes. Depending on the subject matter, and how far the teacher wants to go with a student, the risk each teacher chooses to take in the classroom shapes individual student impressions. That's the chance I feel I'm taking – not to be liked by some students. Not being liked doesn't bother me as much as it used to; but then again, I haven't experienced it this way before. I'd crossed a line of familiarity with this group. Being on the edge may not have been a good idea. The relationship isn't there. (Journal entry M, March 22, 1998, p. 23).*

I know now that I let Nana's behavior shape my decision to stop reading. I felt that I had crossed the imagined boundary that my colleagues and I have often spoken about. I thought about the contrasts between this situation, past teaching experiences, and my personal learning situation with my peers and professors.

Session 9
Mar. 26 / 27
Split Group: Organizing and leading a group (Gold, p. 57 – 66)
Personal Concerns

NARRATOR: The topics and objectives for Sessions 9 and Session 10 were combined. In my enthusiastic preparation, I planned for one too many class sessions.

SCENE:

The web of tensions living out in the second to final classroom session is evident through the following student voices...

LEXIA'S VOICE: We resumed discussions of intervention during our next time slot together. Nan and her group decided to meet on their own time to draw-up an intervention proposal [that] they were now going to present to the class. I was inspired to see that they took it upon themselves to create a proposal to help the group. I felt that I needed to commend Nan for her effort and creativity, and I did so.

ANOTHER STUDENT VOICE: On the day that we took a look at organizing interventions, I was absent because my father had surgery. When I came back I heard that one group presented their ideas for an intervention. I don't think I was the only one, but I did not agree with the proposal. I felt that this class had already gone to limit in trying to fix things. I thought the best solution was to just terminate and forget going over what went wrong and how things could have been done differently. Perhaps I offended the group when I told them I didn't want to anything to do with this intervention. But I had to say what I was thinking.

CECILIA'S VOICE: One of my weakest points in group work is allowing external influence to affect my inner workings within a community. On March 26th, this is precisely what I did. As two members of the class presented their proposal for a relationship-building activity, I was only concerned about me, me, me. The idea was to organize a clothing sale so we could raise money for a class party. Over the past two months, I had been struggling to organize a graduation party for the second-year students, and all of a sudden it felt as though my work was irrelevant. I became so caught up in my own anger and frustration that I did not stop to consider how favourable their proposal actually was. My immediate detest for the idea left me wanting no part in it at all. I was not prepared to work any harder, or devote any more of my time on a class celebration. Forget it!

LEXIA'S VOICE: Unfortunately the class didn't all take to the idea, so we began generating similar ideas that would work within the same time frame. One disagreement was whether the intervention strategy would actually address the problem that the class has been experiencing, and if there would be commitment from the group. Eventually the clothing swap was replaced with the idea of a bake sale and finally a potluck feast. The group settled with the idea that we couldn't "fix" the group, but we could recognize that we were all involved in a group together, even if we weren't a close, cohesive group. We thought [the feast] would make for a nice closure experience and [that] we could contribute in our own way, with varying [levels of] involvement. Members were asked to commit by adding their name to a list, followed by what they would bring to share.

CECILIA'S VOICE: What the mistake was on my part though, was assuming that both parties could satisfy the same purpose. I was so caught up in the fact that I had done all this work on my own, that I failed to see how important it was that the class take on this task together. We needed to work on a project that would allow us to feel rewarded, a project that would bring the group back together again. Fortunately though seeing the error in my ways, I was able to commit myself to the group building task with much enthusiasm and dedication. Yet the fact remains, I nearly let my own agenda ruin my chance of having what I always wanted for the group – a cohesive team of committed players. Evidence enough of how crucial it is that our groups are regarded in terms of "we" not "me."

Chapter Six C

Act Three

A Semester Comes to Completion

Session 11

Apr. 9 / 10 **Split Group: Closure**

Scene

The classroom space felt full containing extra bags, groceries, and more colour than usual. The scene resembled the student parties that used to take place in some of my earlier classroom situations. Food, potluck lunches and celebrations were embraced as important community building situations in the community based programs I wrote about in chapters one and two.

The agenda was written on the chalkboard. The class begins with the potluck lunch. Some students stay in the room close to the buffet, while others take their plates of food to spaces outside the classroom

Final Class 12:50 - 3:15

12:50 - 1:30 Potluck Lunch

1:30 Small Group Activity 1: Where to from here?

1: 50 Small Group Activity 1: Considerations about Closure

2 p.m. Index Cards: 25 Words or Less

3p.m. Closing Prompts

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: The story of the last class session unfolds through the student voices that follow. These voices are drawn from the student narrative papers. The voices included throughout the following accounts suggest the varying levels of interest about a potluck celebration for the closing of the group class experience.

> CECILIA: The final day of class and my last noted journal entry was the largest I'd seen the group since our first afternoon together on January 15th. The previous week we had collectively decided that we would hold a potluck buffet during this class to bring our group work to a close. Whether this was the reason the attendance was so great, or the fact that it was our final day of class, it was none the less refreshing to see so many members joined together.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRTOR: A student who did not attend the last class and the pot luck lunch in protest wrote:

> The group decided to have a potluck to say goodbye. I am certain that this annoyed a number of people. Some people were angry because we are already having a goodbye graduation party. I wish that people felt safe enough to say what they really feel.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Talking about her personal level of commitment, shown through her metaphor, Lexia points to a story of conflict embedded in the classroom process.

> LEXIA: I felt that the potluck was well-organized considering we had such a short planning time. I think that perhaps a lot was revealed by what each member contributed. I know that at the end of school, as students, we are all limited as to time and money, but from my observation, I don't feel that played too much of a role. There were some people who put their energy and time into preparing home recipes; to me this showed motivation, care, and commitment. These people cared enough about their peers to share something that they enjoy at home. A few people came in with shopping bags, bearing what they had picked up at the grocery store ten minutes before. Was this a reflection on how they felt about the group? Other participants were the practical ones, bringing cutlery and plates; does this show their practicality? Or their lack of interest? I'm also so aware of the couple of people who came empty handed; I felt that this was disrespectful and rude. I, personally, felt the need to be consistent with

my efforts to give of my time and energy. Even though I can't eat bread, I baked two loaves and brought them in for others to enjoy.

Student Quest for Certainty Moves to More Questions

CECILIA: As we enjoyed the food each other had brought, we split off into smaller groups to discuss what questions we still might have about group work. My inquiry was not so much about the technicalities that make up a group, as it was about what happened to *us* during this process.

* * *

CECILIA: Though I have had some ideas, I am still left to wonder exactly what it was that caused us to be so malajustive. However, what has changed me for now is that I am no longer so fearful of a group's imperfections.

* * *

Scene Change:

Students worked in small groups and came up with questions.

LEXIA: During our feast, we broke into small groups to come up with all the questions that still lingered about group work.

Scene Change:

Two small groups join to make larger groups. Four groups of eight students work at tables around the room.

LEXIA: We then changed groups and tried to apply these questions to different types of situations and different kinds of groups, to see how the answers would vary (student narrative paper).

* * *

TEACHER'S NOTE: The students were asked to brainstorm the different kinds of groups that they may find themselves working with in the community and in their future. In small groups, I requested that they consider and discuss target group populations, characteristics of those groups, structure and objectives. I asked them to consider the questions that they had about working in groups in these different community contexts.

* * *

CECILIA: This exercise was effective in teaching me about the different ways group-work can be utilized. [This exercise] wrapped up the theory portion of the program. In establishing closure as a group, we were introduced to two different exercises; one of these was using prompts. (Student narrative paper).

* * *

TEACHER'S NOTE: I prepared a handout for the class entitled "Closing Formation Prompts." The students were asked to complete the incomplete sentences with their own words and then share them with the class:

(1) One thing I learned about myself in this course is....

(2) I am still confused about....

(3) One thing I appreciate about myself as a participant is....

CECILIA: These prompts [open-ended phrases] involve reflecting on what I had learned about myself in the class. I learned to speak up and express myself when issues arise instead of bottling up.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Both in her narrative paper, and in a statement to her peers in the class, Cecilia described what she thinks is important to an adult learning community.

CECILIA: I also relayed my appreciation for myself as a participant for my commitment and open-minded approach. Through the duration of our group, I have attended every class and kept up to date on the reading.

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: As the food from the feast was cleared away, and people were still sipping their coffee, several students drifted away. The gaps widened between the theoretical considerations of closure to group work with our clients and the practice of some students who left the classroom before the session ended. To address the gap directly would have been confrontational.

SCENE

With some students leaving early, the room became more intimate. The faces of the students remaining in the room were consistent,

> *familiar. There was a feeling of warmth and genuineness in the room. (Journal M, March 29, 1998, p. 31.)*

LEXIA: The other exercise we employed was to share our own piece of "wisdom about group work."

CECILIA: This was uplifting; it showed that each member learned something important, and they wanted to share it with the rest of the group. It was a small gift that we could take with us in our future; every contribution was relevant and insightful. As I left the room I felt a feeling of peace and of moving on. I am grateful for the experience we had together and satisfied with the outcome.

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Cecilia refers to the element of surprise embedded in the experience. She raises questions about what it means to be 'under-prepared' for a learning situation. Her statement reveals self-change and holds the element of directionality.

Capturing her journey,

CECILIA: On January 15, 1998,I embarked on a captivating journey with a group of people, one that led me though events and experiences completely unforeseen. As I walked through the classroom door of that chilly afternoon, in my book bag I carried a binder, a pen, and a pocket full of naiveté. I was entirely under-prepared for the dynamic interchange that would occur over the next three months, and as such, approached the situation with an unjustified air of assurance. Never before has group work tried so many of my inner-qualities, for this process consistently challenged my patience, diligence, receptiveness, and commitment. In my eyes, it is undoubtedly a story worth telling.

NARRATOR: Reflecting on the semester,

CECILIA: Somewhere over the course of this process, that naivete that was holding me back from the beginning went missing from my book bag. Though I'm not sure the precise moment it happened. This challenge has left me curious and wanting to learn more. I suppose it all comes down to what out professor said on that final day of class, "I hope you leave here with more questions concerning group than you do answers." She has definitely achieved this goal through my experience in this adult learning community, for the fire that has ignited in my belly could only be extinguished by the absorption of more knowledge and experience.

* * *

TEACHER/RESEARCHER/NARRATOR: Lexia suggested that individuals in the community college classroom wanted an opportunity to talk to one another about what they learned from their classroom experience. Thinking back when I reflected on the last session, and the discussion that ensued from all of the questions that the remaining students in the class had about group work and their futures, this is what I wanted too. This final class session felt like a wonderful place to begin.

Postlude

Teacher's Reflective Note

Scene

Students' questions were strewn across the classroom's chalkboards.

At the end of the semester's final group work class, and as one last student methodically placed her final course papers onto the appropriate assignment piles, feelings of melancholy and contentedness stirred within me. The classroom chalkboards still held the remnants of the final class session with the students' questions about the meaning of group work theory to the practicality of their futures. In this final class, the students' conversations shifted from statements of certainty to tones of curiosity and inquiry about the meaning their shared group work experience had to their futures. I felt sad that I had to accept that a number of students had already left and missed these important classroom moments. The classroom had become more than a physical place in an office building.

Throughout the semester, the students and I shared in a group work experience. It was on the final day of the semester when I felt that the students and I were in relationship and *making curriculum* (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995). The classroom had become a place of action and the curriculum - in terms of group work subject matter, the students' past, present and futures, and the teacher's personal practical knowledge - had become all that mattered.

The feelings of contentment I had about the final group work class were short-lived. When I left the classroom with mixed feelings and an array of responses to the classroom experience, a sense of loss and disturbance was also looming. I took a little time to reflect on the experience as I shifted to the task of reading and evaluating course work and student narrative papers. Throughout my reading and careful evaluation of the narrative papers, I revisited the classroom experience, a wide range of emotional reactions to my students and their written responses, my memory of their spoken words, and the decisions I made as a teacher throughout the semester. Questions about teacher and student identity entered into conversations I had with other teachers and researchers. Questions erupted for myself about who I am as a teacher on a shifting community college landscape. I began to question the value of my teacher knowledge that was grounded in a very different place and time.

Researcher's Reflective Note

The account of my semester classroom story has unfolded through the plot line of sessions one through eleven as spoken about in Act One, Act Two, and Act Three. I grasped the teaching and learning experience in the 1998 group work class as a puzzle to work through in my thesis to help me understand the experience as lived for students and teachers in the community college classroom on a shifting landscape.

It is my hope that the improvisation of a playwright's form has provided the reader an opportunity to enter into my classroom story in a more intimate way. The account of the 1998 semester's group work class is a story about a particular experience of curriculum on the community college landscape. The commonplaces throughout this story of curriculum are teacher, student, subject matter and milieu. Following the notion that there are stories within stories, this account is also a research story. My account of group work experience is also a story about the classroom as a place, and a story about change on a community college landscape.

I have illuminated the relationships among people, place and events that raised questions about identity for a teacher who has twenty years of teaching experience at the community college. This story has been about a teacher's expectations and intentions that collided with student stories of experience. This classroom experience and its reconstruction were a testing ground to the teacher's identity.

I have told this story in an attempt to understand what happens in community college classrooms. As a way to talk about each class session within the temporal period of one community college semester, excerpts from students' narrative papers have been included throughout the account. Stories of tension, conflict, and resolution were unveiled. The student and teacher voices threaded throughout the telling revealed teacher and students' colliding stories of expectations in the classroom.

This storied account reveals teacher and student life at the interface of the classroom experience and the student's future in the workplace. This place of tension in a teacher and her students' lives plays out throughout the storied account of the semester. The intentions and thinking embedded in the teacher's curriculum were in collision with how some students storied themselves in the classroom. For some students, the teacher's curriculum was pushing into the future and beyond their experience. These tensions raised the question, *whose curriculum is it?*

Chapter Seven

Temporal Shifts and Interactions on the Community College Landscape: Shaping Experience and Identity

Introduction

To reflect on my group work story and picking up on Heilbrun's (1990) earlier mentioned metaphor, I have peered into the *cracks of the baseboard* and listened for sounds of movement in the classroom experience. I attempt to probe further into the 1998 classroom and what felt like chaos and confusion.

Metaphorically, I am going back stage, and telling the reader about experiences behind my front-stage account of the 1998 classroom. To understand what happened in the group work classroom and why it happened, I need to understand the temporal context of teachers' and students' lives, as lived in the program, prior to my study. I begin with the earlier stories of the landscape, and I look into the relationship between the Helping Profession program and the college milieu. In this chapter, I ask questions that help me think narratively about the temporal dimensions of the group work classroom. I explore temporal change to various events and components of the Helping Profession program – screening and student selection, field placements, threatened closure, new and old locations and changes in faculty – and the college landscape. Because individual changes were not always consecutive with other program initiatives, I am thinking about some of the changes in terms of *shifting fragments* that shape everyday life on the landscape. In the following section, I am delving into parts of a program story of change on a community college landscape. Excerpts from college documents and faculty voices are included as a way to discern my classroom situation in relation to other teacher/student experiences in the college.

Narrative Pieces of the Classroom Puzzle Revealed

Screening and Student Selection

How the college has approached student selection and screening for suitable program applicants, has undergone a number of thoughtful revisions by faculty and their administrators. In the first three chapters of my thesis, where I wrote about my 1980 to 1988 experiences of teaching and learning in community based programs at a community college, I talked about knowing my students. I mentioned that my colleagues and I began to learn about every student who entered our program during the intake-interview. At the same time, among the changes to the college landscape, the Helping Profession faculty, in the post-secondary sector of the college looked for an efficient alternative approaches to their previous individual and group interview selection process.

In earlier times, since the Helping Profession program has mostly been oversubscribed, receiving more than one thousand applications for sixty first-year places, the faculty I worked with took serious steps to create an effective selection process. A principle underlying the selection criteria, was the notion that by the end of applicant's first semester, a faculty member would confidently make his or her field placement arrangements for the student in the community. On completing the semester, faculty members completed teaching and evaluating their students, and following promotion meetings, each teacher in the Helping Profession program became involved in a screening and selection process for the next semester. This out-of-classroom process traditionally took place in the May/June temporal period.

The numbers of orientation/information sessions were divided among the teachers in the program. Following an introduction to the Helping Profession program, applicant's questions were addressed by one faculty member and the panel of students who agreed to talk to the applicants about their program and field placement experiences. The orientation and information sessions took place over a two-to-three-week period. A final decision-making process followed that involved the faculty in the review and assessment of each application package. The applicant's package consisted of an English comprehension test, a personal-interest statement, and an opinion statement about a social issue relevant to the helping profession. Along with two letters of reference, applicants provided evidence of at least fifty hours of volunteer work related to the Helping Profession field. The collaborative phase of the screening process often took place off-campus in the living room of one of the faculty members. In the final phase of this screening process, the program coordinator worked with the registration office and monitored offers and acceptances.

One aspect of this out-of-classroom experience that shaped teacher administrator relationships and classroom practice was a larger social story. In the years 1980 to 1993, when the program was oversubscribed, the registration department had little difficulty filling the first-semester classroom spaces with applicant names put forward by the faculty. During the years 1998 and 1999, when fewer applicants requested entry into the program, offers of acceptance went to applicants who did not meet the teachers' entrance criteria. Faculty felt disappointed and discouraged about their efforts. They came to distrust the process when they realized that individuals in the registration office were making final important decisions that were outside their collaborative and labour-intensive process.

Planning and Supervising Field Placements

A task historically completed by the helping profession teachers, was the setup and organization of field placement settings, for first and second-year students, in the community. Students were requested to indicate their first, second, and third choices about where they wanted to be placed. The faculty then invited agency workers to interview-matching session, at the campus, that allowed community and helping profession workers to meet students indicating an interest in their agency. Following these and other interviews outside this program event, the faculty worked in matching their students to workers in the community. This matching process usually took place in the May/June period, but because of unforeseen circumstances at agencies or events in student's individual lives, the focus also spilled over to other times in the semester.

The teachers in the Helping Program maintain that the field placement component is central to the Helping Profession program curriculum. Through finding appropriate placements and sustaining a constructive working relationship with each agency, the teacher's life extended beyond the walls of the classroom. The workload that amounted from the screening/application procedure and the student placement practicum process began to be discussed by faculty in terms of the inequities of teacher workloads. Teachers drew comparisons to other faculty in other programs. A 1985 community college study captures a tension that shaped the relationships among faculty in the Helping Profession program.

> Most faculty feel that the importance of developing relationship and spending time and energy and contact with students has been demeaned, perhaps because it is simply immeasurable. Regardless of its measurability, such contact is perceived to form an integral part of instructional assignments, assumed but unrecognized in the contractual relationship. (Skolnik, Marcotte, Sharples, 1985, p. 52).

A larger landscape story was also shaping teachers' experience inside and outside the classroom. In 1985, with the inception of workload adjustment and the Standard Workload Formula (SWF), came changes to the screening and application process that shaped relationships among program faculty and classroom practice. With the SWF, the work that faculty did in the application and screening process took on a new meaning.

The complexities of the Helping Profession program included recruiting, selecting, and then suitably placing students into the most appropriate field placement settings. In 1989/90, I was the program coordinator responsible for pulling the final strands of the application process together. After several information and orientation sessions, I divided the applications into five piles and delivered one pile to each one of my colleagues and kept one for myself. One member of our teaching group returned the pile of applications to me with the following note that said:

> Bev, This task is not on my SWF. Until management agrees to pay me for
> this work, I don't accept this as part of my workload.

The returned pile of applications went to two field placement supervisors in the community who were paid by the hour to read and assess the application packages.

Temporality Shapes Student Experience on the Landscape

For the students in my 1998 group work class, the requirements for program admission and the procedure for entrance into field placement practicum were dramatically different than described above. The 1998 students are among the first groups of students who did not have to go through the rigorous application process. Instead, these students were admitted into the program under the college's minimal requirements which was an Ontario Secondary School diploma, advanced or general credits, or mature student status and 19 years of age or older. The only requirement held over from the former procedure was that applicants complete the computerized reading comprehension test. If the applicant is applying at a time when the program is oversubscribed, then the basis for selection becomes the test results of an English subject combined with the score on the comprehension test. The earlier requirement for reference letters and at least fifty hours of related volunteer experience no longer applies. The special consideration that faculty had about acceptance of appropriate candidates has been replaced with the following note in the college calendar:

> Individuals considering the [Helping Profession] program should carefully evaluate their reasons for entering this field. The work calls for a person mature enough to focus on the needs and interests of others while actively supporting individual self-determination. (X College Calendar, 1998/99).

Threatened Closure

There have been two occasions, on the continuum of the Helping Profession program's history, when the program faced its termination. The first occasion occurred not long after the program's inception when it was originally up-and-running and situated at a university campus. A previous college administrator closed the program, then re-started it with new faculty two years later. Though the details about the program's closing are blurred, a historical memory thrives throughout the on-going program story. With more than twenty-years residence at the original college campus, the renovated factory had become a comfortable and thriving home to the Helping Profession program.

Once again in 1997, one year before my narrative inquiry into the group work classroom, the Helping Profession program faced closure. This was the second time the program had been threatened with closure. In 1997, faculty, alumnae, and community workers were taken aback when they learned that the campus had been sold to a developer. Soon after this announcement, the program faculty learned from a senior college administrator that within the program rationalization incentive (adopted by the entire Community College of Applied Arts and Technology system), this particular college had decided its future would no longer embrace "soft" programs. The college was to become high-tech and business oriented. The college's international focus and interest in building partnerships with universities were the new driving forces – forces that did not embrace this particular community service oriented program. (In chapter two I provided a more visceral response to this announcement.)

Student protests, faculty union activity, and public opinion and media attention, immediately followed the college's announcement to close the program. Students took the opportunity to address their concerns with the college's Board of Governors. At the same time, as one way to save the program and faculty jobs, the teachers launched a demographic investigation that showed the need for a community service and helping profession community college program outside the city. Soon after, it was decided that the Helping Profession program would continue, it would not be terminated, but would relocate to a satellite location.

Announcing a New Location

With the revised announcement, students in the program resumed their protest, this time in-house, to the senior administration of the college and the Board of Governors. In their protest, the students noted limited access to public transportation and the need to transfer from the city transit system to a regional transportation system. Many students complained about the distance of the proposed location from their homes and part-time jobs. The students also noted the increased amount of money and travel time it would require for them to complete their program of study. As a result of this second protest, it was decided that students who began their program in the city would not be re-located. Instead, the faculty agreed to travel and teach at both the new locations outside the city and the original central campus. In-coming first-semester students would attend classes at the new site, and the third-semester students would continue their classes at the original campus so they could complete their program without disruption. The protests and uncertainties erupting during this temporal period of upheaval shaped the teachers' lives outside the classroom and on and off the landscape.

Teaching and Learning between an Old Campus and a New Location

The complications embedded in departing from the original campus building to a new location, (although temporary), created chaos for the Helping Profession program. For one semester, the teachers had to concern themselves with a variety of professional duties outside the space of the classroom. While the college took care of large pieces of furniture, like filing cabinets and desks, faculty had to concern themselves with long-standing archives, books and files. Closure with colleagues and staff who had been long-time office neighbours, was on-going from the time of the announcement to arriving at the third location. During this time, the teachers had to pack up their old offices and at the new location establish themselves. Among these changes, the teachers adjusted from having individual offices, to sharing office space with others.

In the midst of setting up in their new community, the helping profession faculty had to think about maintaining student numbers through advertising and marketing the programs. With entrenched community-relationships interrupted by the program's physical move, the teachers had to learn about the region's community agencies and the people who work there, so that suitable practicums could be established. As well, the teachers were expected to initiate a new advisory committee.

The students in my 1998 semester classroom did not attend classes at the original campus home of the program. The 1998 students were not a part of the program's historical continuum. However, these students were impacted by the physical and relational transition since their teachers travelled forty kilometers between the locations, thereby shaping the nature of the teacher/student relationships on the new landscape. As well, the faculty's relationships with these students were dramatically affected by the change in location. Unveiled in the previous chapter, are student perspectives about access to their teachers and the promises the college made about college life. In Lexia's narrative, she writes about feeling "ripped off" by her college experience that felt for like high school. While the program's relocation was shaping the lives and relationships of the Helping Profession teachers and students, the first-time integration of the accelerated and traditional program streams was also having an influencing force.

Voices of Community College Teachers

Among community college teachers, there was debate about the value and impact of subject matter taught during the summer months and in shortened semesters. The accelerated Helping Profession program, offered outside the college's traditional semester pattern, is one example of new college programs meeting the diverse needs and objectives among students. The following faculty statement, taken from one college's employment attitude survey (1999, unpublished), partially captures the debate among teachers teaching in shortened semesters, at the community college. When asked to compare the present college experience to the past, one faculty member wrote:

> Too money-driven, instead of education-driven (p. 7)
>
> The time to deliver a course was long, 7 periods vs. 5 or 6 periods now and 15/19 weeks, so we felt the students had time to digest the material and learn something. Now the time is too short for the learning process to have a lasting effect. I'm reminded of trying to stuff a turkey! In a hurry! (p. 8).

When asked if the "delivery of the college's adoption of the seven-week course in the summer enhances learning opportunities," fifty faculty responses were recorded. Seventeen teachers indicated that the shorted time period was not desirable. Some of the statements made by faculty are included below:

> "Students are hard-pressed to absorb information at the rate it must be delivered. Absences have catastrophic results" (p. 78).
>
> "Our students can't handle the pace of 7-week courses" (p. 78).
>
> "Very few students can read fast enough. "Growth time" too short"(p. 78).
>
> "Many students can barely deal with the expectations spread over 14 weeks. Seven weeks doesn't allow time for students to absorb and consider concepts or to practice and master techniques" (p. 79).
>
> "Many students are coerced to take course in May/June and now even July/August. In most cases, they do not wish to be in class and the effort is very poor" (p. 79).
>
> I have taught compressed 7-week courses. They are a disaster. The students have no time to digest the material. I virtually give the subject away so they can pass"(p. 79).

The accelerated component of the Helping Profession program is part of the community college system's movement responding to some of the recent and growing trend of students, with undergraduate degrees, enrolling in community college and taking courses in shortened semesters. In 1988, at the inception of my involvement with the Helping Profession program, among the students enrolled, no one held a university degree. One year later, in 1989, two students in the program held university degrees, and one other student was completing an undergraduate degree while enrolled in the college. In 1992/3 when I was program coordinator of the full-time Helping Profession program, I recall facilitating many advanced standing applications for the general education subjects that students had completed at the university level or at other colleges. In many cases, when students were successful in their application for advanced standing, their program of study did not include general education and subjects in English and the students was enrolled in the core professional subjects only. With the newly adopted and now current accelerated program, students with university degrees or college diplomas, make up the entire student group of twenty-five. Accelerated students can complete their Helping Profession program in ten months/three semesters. (Students enrolled in the traditional stream, finish their full-time program in sixteen months/four semesters).

The onset of the accelerated program disrupted traditional rhythms of the program's curriculum. At the same time, as apparent in Lexia's narrative, the earlier egalitarian tone embedded in the student's notion that 'we are in the same program together,' was disrupted with competing stories about acquiring advanced standing for program subjects. In her narrative paper, Lexia indicated that advanced standing should be determined by a test made available to *all* of the students in the program. I interpreted Lexia's suggestion as a narrative sign, alluding to an ambience of competition that created discomfort for Lexia and other students. Echoing Lexia's suggestion, in chapter eight, are stories of disturbance told by Lucielle about the student relationships on the landscape that are burdensome. The duration and pace of the accelerated program did not allow for the teacher to learn about (and work through) the onerous student relationships that were shaping classroom experience.

Voices From Administration

Late in August 200, at a large campus meeting welcoming the faculty and staff back from the summer-break, a first-time announcement was made along with a series of familiar agenda items. Travelling from campus to campus, the Director of Student Development and the Assistant to the Senior Vice-President introduced a new document that was developed in particular response to concerns expressed at the College's

Academic Council regarding student behaviour issues. Foregoing this document, the College's Board of Governors agreed that students and staff have a "right to work and study in an environment that asserts the worth and dignity of every individual." (Faculty Guide, p. 3) and in 1984 endorsed *Student Rights and Responsibilities*, a booklet resulting from policies and procedures related to student conduct. In 1998, the College's Board of Governors developed policy and procedures for discrimination and harassment, acknowledging that "Every member of the college community has the right to file a complaint of discrimination, harassment through the College's Discrimination and Harassment Policy" (Faculty Guide, 2001, p. 4). Maintaining their previous academic policy around cheating and plagiarism, the college outlined policy and protocols for acceptable use of information technology. As well, the guide addresses personal safety/security threats.

At the August 2001 campus meeting, the Director of Student Development spoke about, referring to the new document in her hand, *Dealing with Disruptive Student Behaviour*. Recognizing many teachers already use steps in classroom management and adopt preventative actions to classroom disruption, the director's address embraced the new document's statement about classroom management:

> State clear expectations and consequences at the beginning of the semester (and review these as appropriate throughout the semester) based on the premise that they are adults, including what you are prepared to do and what you expect of them. …
>
> Problems of disruptive behaviour should be dealt with as they occur, keeping in mind possible reasons and solutions for disruptive behaviour. …
>
> Progressive disciplinary action in the case of disruptive behaviour should be taken and may consist of verbal warnings, request to leave the classroom for the remainder of that session, referral to the Student Advisor, Program Coordinator or Chair. Document your actions for your own records.
> If the disruptive behaviour persists beyond the classroom management attempts at resolution, contact [xx]…
> It is important to remain calm when addressing adult learners; if you are emotionally upset, it is wise to delay the confrontation for a brief period until you are in control of your emotions and can discuss issues calmly. (Faculty Guide, 2001/2002, p. 11).

When the Director of Student Development spoke with sensitivity about her department's concerns, I sensed her sensitivity to the topic and what I interpreted as her empathic understanding of working with difficult students on the college landscape. Checking my perception about the inauguration of this director's particular announcement, whispering to the nurse educator and long-time teacher seated beside me, "Have you ever heard an announcement of this nature, before, at one of these meetings?

Responding, she said,

"Not in my life time."

I took the director's announcement as another narrative sign within a noteworthy campus scene of a college landscape that is shifting in response to the changing nature of our community college students, who according to the Faculty Guide for Managing Student Behaviour (2001), are adult learners.

So far, in this chapter I have written about changes on the community college milieu as they relate to my story of the 1998 group work classroom. I have provided a glimpse into some of the changes on the community college landscape that shaped relationships among people inside and outside the classroom. Next, I reflect on curriculum in terms of changes to subject matter and the relationship to teachers' and students' lives.

A Story about Curricular Shifts: Teacher and Student Experience

Changes made to the Helping Profession's curriculum included cutting one subject from the previous sequence of three Methods in Counselling Skills subjects.

According to one administrator, the decision to alter the sequence and time reduction, was supported by of advisory committee members, agreed that emphasis in the Helping Profession was shifting from individual work with clients, to group work and community development. There was a sense among some faculty members that the administrator embraced recommendations of a new advisory committee that didn't yet understand the program. These program decisions further divided the faculty.

When I previously taught the counselling subject, the students were indulged in classroom activity that integrated counselling and social work theory with practice. My classroom embraced role-plays, video-feedback and small group discussion mirroring the warmth of the working kitchen I wrote about in chapter two – learning from the Innu women advocates – and how I envisioned Dewey's lab school. I felt strongly about the importance of the subject matter, in a way similar to how I felt when PAL was cut from the program. Capturing my teaching story through narrative –telling, retelling and over time, reliving – and through a myriad of reconstructing the meaning has to the story of teaching life, I came to a new awakening. I came to understand that the subjects cut from the curriculum, were an important part of my professional identity as a community college teacher.

The tenor of a similar loss is made evident in the 1999 unpublished employee attitude survey referred to earlier. In the survey faculty were asked to *rate the degree to which their job makes good use of their skills and abilities, compared to the past.* There were eleven faculty responses to this question. From among these responses, one person wrote that they were enjoying a more challenging situation than in the past. Another person said, "I have grown with the job." Tones of loss and regret were threaded throughout the other responses. Among the written comments of 257 college employees, the following statements resonated with my own experience.

> "I love teaching. I still feel alive when I meet a group of students in class, even though I frequently feel that they are being short shifted [sic] by the system they have trusted by enrolling"(p. 19).
>
> "I am a good literature teacher. I am not a remedial teacher. Yet more and more [it] has become a remedial course, and more and more, I am given more sections of remedial classes." (p. 28).
>
> "It doesn't utilize the area for which I trained and educated." (p. 28)
>
> "Only sometimes – as our standards deteriorate, it becomes more difficult to be proud of yourself"(p. 28).
>
> "In the past, I was more actively involved in curriculum planning and a co-ordination position; felt more involved and was using my experience"(p.29).
>
> When I started, I had a sense of academic expectations that were a lot higher than today. I designed a new course every year, trying to reflect the latest ideas of progressive pedagogy, etc. I tried to include issues of race, gender, class, and sexuality in my curriculum. Today I mostly teach. (p. 29).

For these community college teachers, their focus on the landscape shifted from involvement inside and outside the classroom to the more insular experience of teaching solely inside the classroom space. For these teachers, this shift shaped their workplace dissatisfaction, and raises questions about teacher identity.

The changes in motion on the terrain of the community college interrupts the teachers' past professional and practical knowledge, and what previously worked for students and teachers in the classroom. In a conversation [June 27, 2001] with two hopeful teachers – who embrace experiential learning in their classrooms, which are places where students can direct inquiries through conversing and constructing ideas with others – I learned how they approach their experience-based classroom among the shifting fragments on the landscape. With more students in the classroom and by dividing the assigned teaching period in half, the teachers maintain fewer students in a classroom by choosing to teach in less time. From the teachers' description of their teaching arrangement, I picture a classroom milieu similar to a 'working-kitchen' and Dewey's lab school. Rather than conducting a two-hour seminar-class with thirty students, the teachers obtained administrative approval to teach the class twice to two separate groups of students. With this arrangement, fifteen (of thirty) individuals participated in the first hour and the students left, attended the second half of the time-allotment. The teachers seemed quite satisfied with the alternate arrangement that supported collaborative communication that brought meaning to the students' educative experience in the classroom.

A physical place, such as the community college, supports the process of identity formation through experience. The notion of continuity of experience, and personal history, is a crucial component of interaction. The interaction between the teacher's past and present invokes irresolution concerning the educator's professional identity and uncertainty in respect to the classroom's future.

The changes to the Helping Profession program illuminated in this chapter are among the shifting fragments that shape how community college teachers engage with their students and the curriculum. In this chapter, I have discussed landscape issues that are shaped by the out-of-classroom place. In chapter eight, I reflect on students and their stories that entered the community college classroom. I begin by describing the negotiation of entry into my participant/researcher relationship with Lucielle. From my inquiry into Lucielle's personal narrative, I learn about my participant's relationships with students on and off-the-landscape. Revealed, is how Lucielle positions herself in the classroom and on the panorama of the community college. From her stories of experience, I come to understand the origin of the nature of Lucielle's relationships with her teachers and the program's subject matter. I show why it is important to community college teachers to know their students.

Before turning to the narrative history of the puzzles embedded in my 1998 classroom story, I begin by providing the theoretical scaffold and philosophical underpinnings that guide my thinking, beginning with a personal story that resonates with Dewey's laboratory school. Thinking about place in terms of Dewey's laboratory school, the Muskoka Region of Ontario, one of my favourite places, comes to mind.

> *On weekends, in my childhood and youth, I grew up at a family cottage located on a small fingerlake. The Region of Muskoka is located on the Canadian Shield. The tall pines and strong oak trees thrive in the dry, dusty soil. As a child, the rocks with clusters of quartz and coloured strands of pinks and grays intrigued me. The rocks, with their sharp and jagged edges held the soil for the prickly juniper bushes (where the snakes lived) and the roots of the trees that found their refuge. I am thinking of the fingerlike, approximately four miles in length, as the place where I spent much of my time. As a youngster in the springtime, the lake's rugged shoreline was the place where I observed and learned about tadpoles, frogs, water snakes and algae. In the summer months, I spent many hours* on *and* in *the lake, learning to swim, fish, row, water ski, sail and canoe and more recently, kayak.*

The lake, in this respect, is analogous to how I embrace Dewey's (1938) notion of the relationship between school and society, and especially his focus on the learning laboratory. Previous experience in the classroom and Dewey's (1990/1915) lab school ideas, are the conceptual threads framing my discussion and continuing analysis of the 1998 community college group work classroom story.

Learning Lab

Dewey (1990/1915) maintained that woodwork and metal work, weaving and sewing must not be conceived as distinct studies, but as methods of living and learning. Dewey considered the social significance and types of processes necessary to maintain society, as some of the "primary necessities of community life." For Dewey, the school must be embraced as a "genuine form of active community life, instead of a place apart in which to learn lessons" (p. 14).

Dewey's discussion is particularly suited to my focus on community colleges because Dewey confines himself to "one typical thing in the modern school movement – that which passes under the name of manual training" (p.8). Dewey's discussion embraces the relationship between the school and changing social conditions, similar to the intended intentions at the inception of Ontario's community colleges. Dewey's temporal discussion about industrial change, application of science, production and manufacturing and the growth of the worldwide market, is similar to the pace of change and innovation faced by community colleges (currently and since the college's inception). The socioeconomic challenges that grew out of the changes from the 1920's and 1930's created the niche for a new kind of education and training, and the community colleges became a large part of that educational alternative. (For an abbreviated description of the community college's history see Appendix A).

How Dewey defines society below, resonates with how my colleagues and myself embraced the community based education program, that about in chapters two and three. It was my intention to shape the 1998 classroom group work situation in a similar way.

> A society is a number of people held together because they are working along common lines, in a common spirit, and with reference to common aims. The common needs and aims demand a growing interchange of thought and growing unity of sympathetic feeling. (Dewey, 1990/1915, p. 14).

Dewey begins his discussion of the school and society and a new movement in education by telling his audience that it is necessary to take the "broader, or social, view" so that tradition won't result from individual teachers' arbitrary innovations, fads, or just small detailed improvements that count as meaningful change.

Dewey's description of a busy kitchen with students in the active pursuit of preparing food resonates with my past educational experiences in classroom group work, both as a learner and a teacher. Several years ago, I was afforded a wonderful opportunity to design and facilitate a group work training experience for Muskoka Region's social agency workers. The location of our classroom was in a remote but comfortable cabin on the property of a popular Muskoka Lake resort. Inside the cabin, which was bordered by pine trees on one side, and a view of the lake on another, there was lots of empty space to re-arrange chairs, tables and couches. For a two-week period, the space belonged to my students and me. For this temporal period, with women students working actively together on their own lesson designs for group work training to take back to their own agencies, the cabin space embodied a collaborative generosity and a feeling that a community was continuing to evolve. Dewey's kitchen description resonates with my observations and teaching and learning experiences in the cabin.

> A spirit of free communication, of interchange of ideas, suggestions, results, both successes and failures of previous experiences…
>
> So far as emulation enters in, it is in the comparison of individual, not with regard to the quantity of information personally absorbed, but with reference to quality of work done – the genuine community standard of value. In an informal but all the more pervasive way, the school life organizes itself on a social basis. (Dewey, 1990/1915, p. 16).

In the construct of a helping profession curriculum, of which my group work students are a part, Dewey's words resembled my rationale and my intentions for my curriculum:

> Helping others, instead of being a form of charity which impoverishes the recipient, is simply an aid in setting free the powers and furthering the impulse of the one helped. (p. 16).

Among his notions of the laboratory, Dewey envisioned a place where the student could direct inquiries. Resembling my objectives for the classroom were Dewey's rough classification of the *impulses* available in a school, which are "interest in conversation, or communication; in inquiry, or finding out things; in making things, or construction; and in artistic expression," (Dewey, 1990/1915, p. 47). Dewey suggests that in laboratory, these impulses, provide the students with opportunity for "actual study, for inquiry in gaining information" (Dewey, 1990/1915, p. 53). Approaching the group work subject-matter in the 1998 classroom, I anticipated the students' *impulse* (in Dewey's terms), to know more about the application of group work. Bearing in mind, that in the previous semester, the students had completed a pre-requisite group work subject, I planned the 1998 advanced group work class. I also approached the curriculum, optimistic of the students' attention to interpersonal relationships and social work principles. Drawing on my practical knowledge about the students' experience with the program's curriculum, I also expected the students in the group work class to embrace one another, and me, as a resource.

In 1988, and up until 1991, classroom activity in the Helping Profession program resembled Dewey's description of the learning laboratory. With students working together in problem-solving activities that concerned their field placements, the collaboration in the classroom took on the essence of a busy kitchen. Embedded in my hopes for the 1998 group work classroom, was Dewey's idea of the laboratory school and my own conception of the classroom as community. Embracing Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) notion of the classroom as a physical place, I also participated in the activity, "where the teacher and the students are in relationship in the making of curriculum" (p.12). Though the evolved sense of community in the 1998 classroom was different from what I hoped, the intensely percolating relationships among the students, was creating curriculum. I embrace curriculum to mean *lived experience* (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988) that includes the students, teachers, and the subject matter in the context of the milieu of the classroom situation in a changing world.

In her narrative assignment paper, my participant Cecilia wrote about the intensity of the experience she lived in the classroom. Cecilia's awareness is heightened by way of her classroom narrative reconstruction and comes to recognize new meaning behind her responses to her peers and to her experience of the group work subject matter. In her writing (included in chapter six), Cecilia reveals her emotions about the last class. She feels anger about one group's preliminary plans for the final class. Cecilia identifies feelings of shame about her early response to her peers' initiative. Cecilia writes about eventually shifting to feel receptive of her peers' early ideas and an understanding of her earlier, personal responses – like, eyes downcast on her journal, and writing continuously during the 1998 group work semester experience. From her narrative paper and the conversation I had with Cecilia that followed, I interpreted the variance within the intensity of her experience to liken Dewey's statement:

> The moment of passage from disturbance into harmony is that of the intensity of life (Dewey, 1934/1958, p. 17).

Community College as a Complex Place

The community college landscape is a complicated place. Curriculum making and events involving students' and teachers' lives takes place in the milieu of the community college. The intersection of peoples' lives and the shifting landscape fragments pervade the classroom. One such example is the shaping impact of the time I took to be away from the college. Unfortunately, because the second semester students didn't know me, when I returned I was not in relationship in ways that would help to mold my practice to resemble past teaching experiences.

The complexity of the shifting community college landscape is a story in itself and one that has historical dimensions. In this chapter, I have written about changes and the college's historical dimensions as pieces of the narrative puzzle that shape curriculum in the classroom. To enhance my understanding of the narrative that unfolded over the temporal period of the 1998 group work semester, I have drawn on the historical dimensions of one Helping Profession program and its past relationship to the larger landscape of the community college. Narrative pieces of the classroom puzzle, discussed next, further challenged how I wanted to approach my curriculum. To understand the meaning of the group work experience from a narrative perspective, the classroom story must be understood in the life context of the changing community college landscape.

Chapter Eight

Navigating the Classroom and Student Relationships with Lucielle:

Co-travellers

Student Stories that Entered the Classroom

To learn about the student narratives that entered into the group work classroom situation I continue to investigate behind the scenes of the group work classroom. To understand what happened, (and what I learned from this 1998 classroom situation), I need to know what student stories entered the classroom. I need to understand the experience and the expectations that students carried into the classroom situation. I also need to delve into the narrative history of the class.

As pointed out in chapter four, the narrative papers of Lucielle, Cecilia and Lexia caught my attention for different reasons. Lucielle's transfer from part-time continuing education into the accelerated program, followed by her experience integrating into the mainstream program, intrigued me.

Negotiation of Entry with Lucielle:

Lucielle's narrative forms a part of the context for making meaning of the group work community college classroom situation. Lucielle was the first adult student to participate in my thesis research. Lucielle's community college experience began in the Continuing Education evening program. Lucielle completed most of her course work in the continuing education program. She finished two courses in the piloted accelerated program during its inception in the May/June period. My entry point into Lucielle's life occurred in the group work course. I decided to invite Lucielle into my research after reading her final narrative paper assignment. Lucielle's paper candidly described her experience in the group class. Her narrative pulled at me in a number of ways. Her expressed feelings of exclusion and frustration with her classmates, especially in contrast to the descriptions she gave of her experience in the part-time continuing education program—resonated with the dissonance I felt in my own teaching situation.

My class records show that Lucielle's attendance was sporadic. I recall her telling me that she had to leave the class early so that she could work an extra shift. Lucielle seldom spoke in class and I gained little sense of her in the classroom. I thought she was one of the students who missed the first class, though her narrative paper suggests that she may have been present. In light of the turbulence in this class, I have more vivid memories of some of the other students who openly expressed their dissatisfaction with one another, the process, and the assignments. However, I do have a clear memory of what turned out to be for both of us, a meaningful interaction in a particular moment during class time. From her narrative paper, I learned that these same temporal moments in the class were also consequential to Lucielle:

> One of the other skills that I saw you use from the readings was asking the quieter student members what their thoughts were on a topic. I have seen you use this often (and I have been on the receiving end). I think that this is a wonderful tool to use. First of all it helped me to feel that my opinion mattered in class. We just came from a small group exercise and had identified that one of the classes' problems were that there were cliques within the class. Everyone was voicing how the accelerated students never really blended with the other students. I just kept out of it because I felt that I no more blended with the other students than I did with the accelerated. You, however, called out my name and asked me what I thought about what was being said. At first, I felt put on the spot because I didn't want to sound like an idiot. But then, I felt that you really wanted to hear my opinion and that it mattered. I really did appreciate this. I confessed that I did not feel included in either of the groups. (Student narrative paper submitted April 17, 1998)

I let the summer pass before deciding Lucielle was among the participants I would invite into my inquiry. Early in September 1998, I attempted to contact her and talk to her directly about my research. I ended up leaving my name and home telephone number in response to the cheerful and inviting answering machine massage. Two weeks after leaving the message, Lucielle responded with a message on my answering machine. I recall my own feelings of trepidation as I dialed her telephone number.

> She told me that she had been in Portugal visiting with her parents, with her significant other, and her two children. The trip was a graduation gift. I did not know that she had graduated and I congratulated her. She told me that she finished her last three courses in the continuing education program, and that it took her five years to complete the program. I asked her how her job hunt was going. She told me that she was working relief at her previous field placement and looking for full-time employment. She seemed pleased to hear about the job vacancies I told her about. (Field note, September 13, 1998).

I told Lucielle that I had really enjoyed reading her narrative paper. She told me that she wrote the paper at three in the morning and that she "decided to be honest and write what she really thought." From writing the paper, Lucielle told me that she realized "I really did get a lot out of the course." I asked if she would like to discuss the paper more thoroughly.

She interrupted me and said,

> "For your thesis?"
>
> I replied "Yes."

During our first telephone conversation, I told Lucielle that I thought we could learn from one another and I explained what it means to be a co-participant. To my relief and delight, Lucielle seemed genuinely pleased and enthusiastic about her possible involvement as a co-participant. She told me that she felt honoured to participate. On September 15, 1998, Lucielle answered the door of her home and she met me with a European hug, kissing the air beside both my cheeks.

She said "Oops, this is how they do it in Portugal." Lucielle invited me in and I followed her into the kitchen. She offered me tea or coffee. She was having tea. She made tea with a bag in a glass cup. I told her that I take my tea as milky as hers. No sugar. She forgot and put sugar in it. I said I would drink it with sugar. I didn't want her to dump it out. (Field note, September 15, 1998).

As I was packing my tape recorder at the end of our first meeting, I asked Lucielle how she found our time together. She told me that she "enjoyed it, liked it." She asked me, and I told her that I enjoyed it, too. I added that I felt a bit anxious because I wanted our time together to be a good experience for her. (I didn't admit that I struggled with feeling our first meeting was more like an interview than I wanted it to be. It occurred to me that to get my participant to tell stories involves more of an art than I initially thought.) As I searched for my car keys in my oversized bag, her daughters arrived home from school and Lucielle introduced me as her past teacher, and now friend.

Eight days following our first meeting, I contacted Lucielle to make arrangements to drop off a copy of the transcript that I had transcribed from the audiotape. I told her I found it quite exciting to be in our conversation again when I transcribed the tape. Her clarity and ability to articulate came through on the tape and in the transcript. During our conversation, Lucielle told me again how much she was enjoying the process. Two days later Lucielle called me to say that she had read the transcripts.

"I'd like to meet again," she said.

I asked her how it felt to read the transcript.

"You don't feel like you're reading about yourself. It's like reading somebody else's life, not my own. It's a bit strange." (Field note, September 25, 1998).

Who is Lucielle?

Lucielle is thirty-two years old. When I first met her, she was a single mother of two girls, ages six and eight, and was going through a custody battle with her ex-husband who she married at age twenty-one. Since graduating from the program, Lucielle has remarried and works in a helping profession agency close to her home.

When she spoke about her life before community college, Lucielle described herself as having made "a good income." I learned that she and her first husband built their own home and that she valued her community.

> "It was wonderful. We lived in a brand new subdivision like this one, but the difference was everyone was our age. Everybody had small children. The kids on our street alone, each had about fourteen friends. It was amazing." (First Meeting Transcript, p. 5)

She told me about her work life, which I later learned was the foreshadowing of her re-entry to the formal educational system.

> I was commuting. I just had the one daughter, and I was two hours a day with my kid, who was screaming in the car, in the commute. It was hell. I'd leave the house at five-thirty in the morning. I'd get home about six-thirty at night. There was time to give my daughter her bath, make dinner, and go to sleep. That was it. The house was a mess. I was miserable. That's it. So I quit. (First Meeting Transcript, p. 1).

Listening to Lucielle's commuting story pulled at me. I was familiar with the roadway she spoke about. I travelled this same route except I was going against traffic, and during my commute I had in-depth conversations with my colleague Christina about our teaching and learning with adult students in the community based program.

> I stayed home to take care of the kids for six years. There was something missing. I always wanted another education, and I wanted to get out of the house. I didn't want to be surrounded by kids all the time and housewives whose major concern was how to get a carpet stain out. So with the course being taught at the college, at a campus just twenty minutes from where we lived, I signed up. (First Meeting Transcript, p. 6).

As the conversation unfolded between us, Lucielle's description of her dream home with her first husband shifted from wonderful to difficult. I was surprised at the depth of her disclosure as we sat talking for the first time in the living room of her warm and inviting home. As a way to clarify Lucielle's reasons for entering into the Helping Profession program, I asked, "So, before you went into the Helping Profession program, did you have a sense that you *wanted* to be a helping professional?"
She told me again about the places she had worked, and described in more detail how she saw herself and what she did.

> "I would be sitting at my desk, and I was very good at what I do. There is one thing, *what I do*; I'm very good at. I know that about myself. But I'm pushing papers. You know, eight to four. Eight hours. At the end of day, hell, I've got a paycheck to show for it. But what did I do? I made someone else's minutes look good. I put together an ombudsmen bill that looked amazing. But it's not my ombudsmen bill. It's someone else's. How have I changed those people's lives? I just didn't want to do that any more. I knew that I wanted to

> help, or change, or affect. Let me rephrase that. I've always been interested in dealing with others. I wanted to affect people. So social work was an obvious choice." (First Meeting Transcript, p. 7).

Lucielle enrolled in the continuing education program and took her courses on a part-time basis in the evenings at a small satellite college location housed in an office complex. This space resembled the program site of the full-time program that Lucielle later attended. It was also the location of the 1998 group class.

It was not uncommon for the continuing education courses to be cancelled because of reduced enrollment, though Lucielle did her best to make certain the courses she needed to graduate were offered at the campus close to her home. The following transcript excerpt captures Lucielle's determined approach to her continuing education program.

> "They kept saying that they wouldn't have the next course at the campus. They were going to have it all at the main campus. For me, I hated driving. I would not get on the highway. So I would petition. I would get to all the students by knocking on every social work classroom door and petition for the class that I had to be brought to this small campus. I had the coordinator of the part-time program on speed-dial. I'd say, 'how many signatures do you want?' She would say 'I've got to have twenty-five.' So I'd get her thirty signatures. And you know, out of those thirty, maybe ten would sign up for the next class. But she'd do it. I brought classes up here. I put classes together that only had nine people. One time I had a class, but she wouldn't do it at our

> campus. It had to be at another small campus, which was a compromise. It was only five students. And you know, I wanted those courses." (First Meeting Transcript, p. 6)

I asked Lucielle to tell me about her experiences in the continuing education classroom.

> "Like, I was loving it. It was therapeutic. It was very therapeutic. Being in a room with women, *adults*, talking about anything but our kids. And people were actually paying attention to what I had to say. Without really trying that hard, and without keeping up with the readings, I was doing straight A's. I loved essay writing. I love essay writing. It came second nature to me. So I started to value myself." (First Meeting Transcription, p. 6).

Lucielle told me that she felt heard and that she could voice her opinions in class. I wanted to understand more about the classroom space and I asked her to describe the atmosphere in the class.

> "Laid back. Laid back. They were adults. And I keep going back to that. That is very important to me. It has been throughout my education.

Lucielle identified what was important to her in the classroom:

> A great sense of humour. We'd be talking about something very, very serious. Case in point – one of my classes, they had a video about a woman who went to a shelter. She was crying. There were tears. Her husband put out cigarette butts, blah, blah. *Very heavy stuff.* And I guess when the movie was done, right, everyone was very, very serious. The

> teacher is teaching the lesson, and I cracked a joke. Right. *But it was okay.* Right. It was okay because this was very serious stuff about, [pause], you know. We had to relieve some of the pressure that comes with it. And I like that. And as compared to the full-time program, given the same scenario, I don't think that the joke would be that well received. Right.
>
> … Because, [pause] and this age thing really plays a big factor - and at this age, this stuff - 'We're going to save the world. We're going to make the world a better place to be.' And sometimes the best way to get through something is a great sense of humour." (First Meeting Transcription, p. 7).

About the students she met in her continuing education classes, Lucielle said:

> "I loved my classmates. I developed some friendships right from the start. That stayed with me for many years to come. I loved the class!" (First Meeting Transcription, p.6).

As she continued to story her experience in the continuing education program Lucielle began to reveal classroom tensions.

> There were the five students. It was good, accept the teacher made it very apparent in one class, when we were talking about issues of abortion, that she was a very strong, active pro-lifer. And that hurt me personally, and that made me feel very unsafe. At one point where we were talking about the subject, I didn't say anything, right. I said nothing. I guess

> there were only four other students, and they were just agreeing with the teacher, saying, "yeah, you're right." You know. There shouldn't be...[pause]. And they were all for pro-life, that is. At one point the teacher said the word 'easy,' and referring to abortion she said it was "too easy." And, at that point, that's when I really got mad, and I spoke up. I just said, "having an abortion is not something you can just," [pause] at least for everybody, I said "it's not something you can go, and you do, and walk out and it's over with. It's not like getting a mole removed or something." I said "it stays with you for the rest of your life." And that shut her up. Think about it. When you look into your kid's eyes, you wonder what it would be like if they had a brother or sister. Whatever. So that made it a little tense for the rest of the semester. (First Meeting Transcription, p. 10).

Along with one other student who was in the accelerated program, but did not have university degrees, Lucielle was accepted into the accelerated stream because she required two of the five courses offered in the May/June period. For Lucielle, the course offerings in the accelerated program held over the summer months permitted her an opportunity to take courses that weren't offered locally through continuing education.

She Calls Herself an Ugly Duckling

Throughout our shared conversations, narrative strands stood out and I began to understand how Lucielle stories herself. Among the patterns in our conversations, was the subject of Lucielle's self-esteem. Lucielle told me that she perceived herself as ugly. Other narrative fibers that stood out were feelings about not belonging and her feelings of exclusion. These narrative threads are captured in the following transcription. As Lucielle shared, she reached for her journal that she placed on the coffee table in front of her.

> "I have always known that I didn't belong. Like what you just read, genetically, with my family, my parents. I never belonged. I never did. I've always accepted that. That's always been an issue too. Because when i was growing up, here in Canada, I'm considered Portuguese by everybody else. In Portugal, I'm considered Canadian. And I remember when I was 12 years old, I wrote to the Star version of Ann Landers, and I explained the situation. I said, 'What am I? Am I Portuguese, or am I Canadian?' She didn't answer my question. She put it in the paper, and she went on and on about going through puberty, and questioning your own self-identity. Blah, blah, blah. But she didn't answer my question. So that belongingness was sort of left hanging out there. But I thought I had come to terms with that." (Meeting 3, p. 6)

Lucielle's narrative resonated with my memory of the tale of *The Ugly Duckling*. I asked her if she knew the story. With great enthusiasm, her response was

> "My favourite! My favourite!"

Continuing she said,

> "Actually, I was talking about that yesterday. It was really funny you mentioned it. Last night I went to work, and when I was putting my oldest daughter to bed, I still had my make-up on, and she said, 'Mom, why are you wearing make-up? I

> don't like it. You don't look like mommy when you're wearing make-up. And I said, 'You know, mommy wasn't born as pretty and beautiful as you are, so mommy feels a little better about herself when she has make-up on."

Lucielle told me that she "started wearing it years ago." I was reminded of her earlier story about the arguments she had with her parents in her early teens about wearing make-up and her choice of dress. She said to placate her parents, she left the house in the morning wearing no make-up. At the bus stop, Lucielle applied her make-up and peeled off the baggy track pants that were covering her tight-fitting jeans. As she continued with her story about the conversation with her daughter, Lucielle told me that her daughter said,

> "Well, mommy I'd like you without make-up. I think you are pretty without make up. If you have a pretty daughter, like you say I am, then *you* have to be pretty." (Meeting Two Transcript, p. 6.)

As I reflected on Lucielle's explanation to her daughter, I considered the female students in the program and their varying stories of self-esteem. Among the courses in the first semester of the program, is an extensive subject matter component on personal self-esteem, personal awareness and interpersonal relationships. I wondered if Lucielle's classroom experience embraced opportunities to talk about her feelings and perceptions of herself as an ugly duckling.

Laughing, Lucielle tells me,

> "I *love* that kid. I said, 'Thank you honey. But mommy... it's called self-esteem. Mommy has a problem with it'" (Meeting Two Transcript, p.6.)

Lucielle told me that when she was a kid, she used to like hearing the ugly duckling story, and that her daughter knew all about this.

> "And so we just had a really good mom-daughter talk last night." (Meeting Two Transcript, p. 6).

There was an increased sense of ease during the third meeting Lucielle and I shared in her home. My field note reveals this shift:

The time spent with my participant felt relaxed. The connection felt open. As Lucielle opened the door she said she was putting a load of laundry in. She also said, "Today we have fresh apple danishes." I asked her if she made them and she said yes. She told me that she is still using the apples from apple picking. When she served the danish she poured freshly made icing over the servings. I was struck by how professional looking the danish was. She made a pot of tea. [Oct. 29,1998]

I showed Lucielle the book, *Women Who Run with the Wolves* (Estes, 1995) and pointed to the story about the ugly duckling. I told Lucielle that her story about her daughter's comment about the make-up and our conversation at our last meeting pulled at me enough to revisit the story of the Ugly Duckling. I gave Lucielle a brief summary of the book. From the book I read,

> You may match your family you belong to... you may not belong to your original family at all. You may match your family genetically, but temperamentally, you may belong to another group of people. Or you may belong to your family perfunctorily, while your soul leaps out, runs down the road, and is gluttonously happy, munching spiritual cookies somewhere (Estes, 1992, p. 178).

As I finished reading Lucielle said,

> "Do you know what? I've got to read you something."

Lucielle excused herself from the room and returned carrying her journal. She said,

> "That thing about belonging. I started a new journal the other day."

From her journal she reads,

> "... I'm ugly. Wearing make-up in the shower... I don't belong."

She raised her head from her journal and said to me,

> "It took me awhile to write this down. I DON'T BELONG."
>
> [Meeting Three Transcript, October 29, 1998, p. 5).

The narrative fibers woven through my conversations with Lucielle were diverse, relevant, and would have brought meaning to the classroom curriculum in a number of ways. Though no one spoke directly about the tale of the ugly duckling during the group work class, the theme of *not belonging* revealed itself in a number of the students' group work narrative papers.

Lucielle's Story of the Full-Time Program

Embedded in my own practice in group work with students, was the idea of creating a safe environment in the classroom that would be conducive to the often times, therapeutic nature of group work. Lucielle often spoke of safety in the classroom. I inquired about her feelings and the meaning of safety in her life. "How was it for you that you yourself had been a victim of spousal abuse?

> Lucielle said, "I always feel guilty calling myself a victim. Because after working at two different agencies, I worked with some people who have been through true abuse. I've got nowhere near the abuse. Shit head never punched me."
>
> (First Meeting Transcript, p. 3).

Lucielle laughed, and continued,

> "I still feel so much anger there. He never punched me. Or kicked me. The episodes were few and far between. But there was a lot of pushing and shoving. I had things thrown at me, and the usual comments, 'you're nothing without me, you

> have nothing without me', and so forth." (First Meeting Transcript, p. 4).

Repeating my question, I noticed her strong listening and tracking skills when she responded.

> "How does it feel during the course? I got angry a lot of times at the start of the course. The full-time. Let me rephrase that. The full-time as opposed to the part-time [program]."

Lucielle explained that at thirty-one years old, she was among the youngest students in the part-time program.

> "Most of the women in the part-time course have been though some things in their life too. So when we would open up about stuff like this in class, it felt safer. I'd feel among my own." (First Meeting Transcript, p.3).

Lucielle's description was similar to what I had remembered from teaching in the part-time program several years ago:

> "And in the full-time course—we're dealing with eighteen, twenty-one years olds. And when an eighteen-year-old or twenty-one year old tells me it's okay, that they understand, no, they don't. They have no idea. You haven't been alive long enough. There is nothing, and I know that can very unfair to them, and sometimes I do feel guilty for feeling that, but that is the case. I can't. I do not feel safe talking to a twenty-one year old who hasn't been through it." (First Meeting Transcript, p. 3)

I was struck by the passion behind Lucielle's words, and the similarity in our responses because, in that particular class, I did not feel safe either. I had become accustomed to open and mature dialogue and to feeling relatively free in the classroom. I could be myself. In the 1998 group work classroom it felt so easy to make a mistake, or offend a student in the class without meaning to.

I wondered if Lucielle had any one at all in the class with whom she had a sense of trust. I asked her if she felt she developed any friendships with students in the full-time program. Lucielle told me about the other interpersonal connections that she made while in the full-time program, but did not continue contact with after the course. Lucielle told me the names of the two women she worked with on the assignment, forgetting the last name of one woman. She described their experience as "having a blast." In the following transcript excerpt, Lucielle describes one particular event when her peers came to her home.

> "I felt safe. I felt comfortable. It so happened the teacher chose our topic, of women that (was) leaving an abusive relationship. He just chose it randomly. So of course they encouraged me to open up. They were very receptive to it. At the time, Joan was working at a partner abuse program. The topic was so easy." (First Meeting Transcript, p. 4).

Lucielle and the Subject Matter

Lucielle appeared light-hearted when she spoke about working on the controversial—and in her case – the personal subject of spousal abuse in one classroom situation prior to the group work class. Her story about the ease of the assigned task raised questions for me about her meaning of *easy*. Does she mean familiar? I learned from Lucielle that the subject matter topics that she refers to as easy, are often the topics close to her personal experience. I wondered if she storied community college education as easy. I recalled a conversation when she told me that she got "all A's without really trying hard" and "without keeping up with the reading." Is this a grand narrative about standards in the community college? My conversation with Cecilia sheds light on how her peers embraced the subject matter.

> My thing with college is that I took it very seriously, unlike some of the other people in class. College is hard work. Like putting in a lot of hours. When I left I was a graduate with high honours. I made a sacrifice not to do what everyone else was doing. I put my head down and I just went for it. I was just known for being on top of it. It didn't phase me. I mean, at first there were a couple of really intimidating people in that class. But I wasn't there to make friends. It was weird working with X because she would just whip out an assignment. The questions that I was asked were really serious to me, so assignments took a lot longer than probably a lot of other people. (Interview Transcript, February 7, 2001).

Lucielle laughed as she told me she no difficulties approaching the subject matter. "The topic was easy." As she spoke, Lucielle motioned to her journal and pointed to the vacant chairs in the room where the two women sat. I recalled Lucielle's earlier stories about wanting change and a sense of challenge in her life. She told me that she wants an education that will prepare her to "affect others." When I read Lucielle's narrative paper and reviewed the transcriptions of our in-depth conversations, I saw hints of self-pride about completing her community college education interwoven with regret. I wonder what feelings and thoughts about community college education and the work she did there went unsaid. I wondered about her personal standards, her personal identity, and what shaped her identity as a community college learner.

Lucielle and Relationships with Others

As Lucielle's narrative became known to me through our conversations and her writing, I learned that her emphasis, in terms of the curriculum, is on people and the relationships she has with them. Reading from her journal, Lucielle said,

> "I felt safe with them. And neither of them came from an abusive background. I felt like I was among my own, even with them."

Unlike the students Lucielle told me about earlier, the lives of the women she refers to above do not share some of the narrative filaments that Lucielle had in common with women in the part-time program. However, their maturity and their ability to listen without judgement shaped a meaningful and positive learning relationship. It seems that Lucielle discovered that relationships with women whose lives were unlike hers were possible in an environment that was free from judgement or ridicule.

Raising her head from her journal, Lucielle said, "So, yeah, it definitely was beneficial to work with them." (First Meeting Transcript, p. 4).

Delving further, I asked Lucielle, "Do you think it was anything other than their age?" Without a pause, Lucielle said,

> "Their individual personalities. Mary was very receptive. She was our grounder. Joan was the calm one. She would be the strong voice, like 'no, we can't do this.' We made up a brand new character. [*Rather than draw on Lucielle's personal story of abuse*]. This was not about me. Joan was able to bring in a lot of knowledge from the mixture of the clients she worked with. It clicked. The three of us just really clicked. Their age had a lot to do with it. But their individual personalities had a lot to with it." (Italics added; First Meeting Transcript, p. 4).

From Lucielle, I learned that the three women students shared and integrated their stories of personal and professional experience into the course assignment. I was intrigued by the contrasting descriptions of Lucielle's experiences in the full-time and continuing education programs. I was impressed with her seeming ability to understand the nature of curriculum as I embraced it in Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) terms, as a person's life experience. She wrote:

> "I learned quite a bit from you. Sometimes I don't think that the lessons I learned were ones that you had intended on teaching." (Narrative paper submitted April 17, 1998).

How I embraced the curriculum in the group work class was that everything that happened in the class was about the student's relationship with one another and the application of their personal and practical knowledge in the classroom. The classroom process became the subject matter content. I felt able to be open to her criticisms of the course. As I read, I heard her ability to empathize with some of the challenges I was contending with throughout the semester. She wrote:

> "I felt that the class was not ready to accept the information you provided as something they could learn from, or as an opportunity to explain who you were." (Lucielle's narrative paper, submitted April 17, 1998).

In her paper Lucielle touched on the very crux of what I felt myself dealing with in my own struggle to define who I had become as a community college teacher and an adult educator.

> "The class (and myself included) wanted to know what you expected from them and how and when it was due. One of the courses I took in the part-time program was Principles of Adult Learning. I knew the lack of structure was part of that curriculum. That particular class was very helpful in a room full of mature students. I think that when you are dealing with people straight out of high school or university, they are not accustomed to setting their own goals. The lack of structure might be a bit difficult for them to understand. I include myself because even though I am a mature student, and as I said to you before, the lack of commitment was not there. I just wanted to know what you wanted,

> and how, and when it was due." (Lucielle's narrative paper submitted April 17, 1998).

I was also intrigued by what Lucielle calls, 'lack of structure.' Lucielle had been absent, like a number of other students, on the first day of classes when I went over the course outline in detail. In my mind, I had designed and set out a very structured outline, especially for a group course. If anything, I had concerns about being too structured. I was also intrigued with her point about self-directed learning. How is it that an approach to self-directed learning gets interpreted as lack of structure? What is behind Lucielle's interpretation? I wonder to what extent other community college teachers embrace the notion of guiding students along the continuum between teacher-directed and self-directed learning? In many ways, the classroom and subject matter experiences in the group work class and in the past Principles of Adult Learning class were similar. In both situations, the teacher approached the classroom with an experiential curriculum. The personal narrative of each student in the learning situation, and the combination of those narratives, shaped the nature and the direction of the classroom experience. The classroom in both of these situations often resembled Dewey's description of the learning lab.

Lucielle was also insightful about many of the students' difficulties with setting goals. The seemingly insurmountable challenges that goal-setting presented for the students was the source of my disappointment when I learned that the Principle of Adult Learning course that addressed this very subject was reduced to one hour of class time from the traditional three-hour period.

Lucielle's Story Sheds Light on the Narrative of the Group Work Class

Lucielle explained that she saw the accelerated program as a compliment to the college.

> "The fact that anyone who has a BA and comes into college. What does that say about the college program? Right. It's a compliment. ... It gave me confidence in the program" (Third Meeting Transcript, p. 11).

As we continued to talk about the accelerated group and her experience of other courses with that group, Lucielle's classroom story shed light on the narrative of the group work class. She identified a tension in the narrative of the relationship between accelerated students and the teachers. Embedded in her story, were the shaping qualities of an event that likely took place in only a few moments of class time. Lucielle's story of the classroom was captured in our audiotaped conversation.

> "The way the faculty treated these students. Oh God. There was one time in class when I was going to say, "give me another teacher." It was so obvious. Oh, I forgot how he phrased it. But it was one of the first classes. I can't remember, but it was so obvious. He said something along the lines of, you know, *the accelerated students... Expectations are higher. I expect better essay writing from accelerated students.* We were all doing the same assignments. However he expected, he had high expectations for the accelerated students. And we were all left with our jaws on the floor. Because what that said to me and the other people who weren't accelerated, was, *they're smarter than me.* What he said to the accelerated students is, *you have to work three times as hard as everybody else* because he expects these other people to be morons. And what it further went to do in that statement, was drive an even bigger gap, which was already there, between the accelerated program and the other students. So he managed, in one sentence to just get everybody angry. It was just the dumbest thing he could of said. He made everybody else feel

> this big. Right. The people who weren't accelerated students hate the accelerated students. And the accelerated students hate him as a result. (Third Meeting Transcript, p. 11.)

Lucielle and Teacher Relationships

Lucielle explained that she had the continuing education coordinator's phone number on speed dial so that she could keep checking the course offerings and student enrollment. As pointed out earlier, Lucielle was determined to get the courses in place, that she needed and at the location that suited her the best. Lucielle provides a picture of herself collaborating with the staff and faculty working in the continuing education program that was in contrast to how she interacted with people in the full-time program.

In her earlier story about the continuing education classroom with five students and the teacher she described as a pro-lifer, Lucielle illustrates her voicelessness and withdrawal and from the topic of conversation until she gets angry enough to speak up and tell others what she is thinking:

> "I just wanted to clarify that it is not always what you described it to be. I wanted to voice that [the discussion] was starting to insult me" (First Meeting Transcript, p. 10).

Later she said,

> "I didn't think they [the teacher's comments] were appropriate." (First Meeting Transcript, p. 10).

I got the sense that both of these stories, that is, the experience of getting the courses she wanted to be scheduled at the college site of her choice, and voicing an alternative perspective on the issue of abortion, pleased Lucielle. I believe Lucielle took pride in advocating for her own needs, taking action, speaking out, and being heard by her peers and her teachers.

I learned about an added dimension of Lucielle's relationship with the program coordinator and the dean of continuing education when she told me a story that spoke to her expectations of teachers. She described teacher and student conflict and her strong feelings that shaped her decisions to withdraw from a course and complain to the administration.

> "It was in psychology. It was a male teacher. ... It was around single parents, and how easy divorce is, and how screwed up kids become when they are brought up by a single mother. ... And he made some kind of insinuation about the teacher strike that had just happened. He said his wife was making a comment about the teacher strike and how she thought the government wasn't doing such a bad thing. And he goes, 'you know, I had to go and set her straight.' He forgets right. And I found that so offensive. As a single mother, ... he made other references to single mothers, and he made other references to divorce. But I took it to the program coordinator and I made mention of it to the dean. After that he called me. He apologized profusely. I quit that class. And he asked me to come back, to reconsider my decision. And he apologized that he had offended me. He especially made it clear that his wife is educated and he always encouraged her to pursue an education, post-secondary, university.... It wasn't really what was said. But that I didn't say anything. I don't like coming home feeling like a total wuss [sic]. Right. ... So I felt better for doing that. (First Meeting Transcript, p. 11).

Lucielle told me that she missed three of the classes and still managed to get an 'A' in the course.

> "It was from the three classes I missed from when he offended me. *That badly.* And it was a condensed course. So if you miss three classes, that's major. These are four and a half hour classes." (First Meeting, Transcript, p. 11).

In her stories of various classroom experiences and her relationships with teachers, students, and events, Lucielle had talked about some challenging situations. With this in mind, I asked her the following question.

> "What was the class you struggled with the most in all of the curriculum?"

Lucielle replied, laughing, "Yours."

> "Can you talk a little bit about why it was so hard?" (First Meeting, Transcript, p. 11).

Aspects of Lucielle's reply were consistent with what she wrote in her narrative paper. When we were in conversation about this in her living room, Lucielle said the following:

> "I didn't feel like I belonged. Right. Worse off, I didn't feel that it mattered that I didn't belong. I was lost, right. Because of the lack of structure. But I understood why the lack of structure. I mean, self-directed learning all over again. You set your own pace."

This is the part of Lucielle's message that was consistent with what she wrote in her narrative paper, and one of the key reasons I was interested in inviting her as a co-participant into my research. Earlier, I posed questions about how Lucielle storied structure. Continuing, Lucielle said, "The reading material. At that point, well, I couldn't with everything else that was going on. It was really difficult."

In a conversation subsequent to this first meeting, I learned that Lucielle was in the throes of a custody battle with her ex-husband. Lucielle had concerns about issues of safety for her daughters on the weekend visits they were having with their father. As shown through her narrative, Lucielle also had concerns about issues of safety in the group work class:

> "I didn't feel safe. There was a lot of participation that was required for your class. I couldn't. Honestly, I couldn't participate. Anything I would have participated with, would have just been surface. Shallow. Right. Or bull shit. And because, ... If the safety was not there [pause], the time was not there."

Lucielle sense of unsafety shaped her course of action in the classroom:

> "There were too many people there. They were too young. Right. Everything was working against it. It was just all working against it. And it just seemed that, when I came to class, and we would sit down at the table, and people would be talking about last week's class, then there would be people who would be griping about their feelings toward it. I didn't relate to that. And I just kept thinking, *okay, how much longer? Just get it on. Get it on. What do I have to do? When is the next assignment due? Get me through this.* (First Meeting, Transcript, p. 11 - 12).

Lucielle contrasted the group work class with one of her other classes.

> "We would be talking about native issues. We would be talking about *Workfare.* We would be talking about all these

> other topics. It would be controversial. But they weren't about me personally. And the structure was there. So the safety issue didn't come to play a role in that. Where as in your classroom, it was." (First Meeting Transcript p. 12).

In the first required group work class the students did not write journals or narrative papers on their own experience.

> "We are doing essays. We are talking about the chapter. We are watching a video. Here are the notes. And even with the class participation, it wasn't about me." (First Meeting Transcript, p. 12)

The meaning of *structure* and *safety*, two words that Lucielle used often, began to reveal itself. I pointedly asked Lucielle about her understanding of safety. In her explanation, Lucielle made reference to the Coat of Arms activity in the group work class.

> "I scratched the surface. Right. What are these guys going to buy? It's the surface that I'll sell these guys. They'll buy it and then go on to the next person and leave me alone. And they did." (First Meeting Transcript, p. 12).

Lucielle's explanation was consistent with what I viewed in the videotape of the Coat of Arms activity.

From Lucielle's explanation, I understood that she was concerned about being judged by others. She told me that she did not trust how her peers would receive her.

> "I don't trust them. I don't know them. I don't *want* to know them."

Lucielle's two group work stories of experience as lived previous to the 1998 group work class provided me insight into the meaning of safety for her. I also learned about the narrative that she brought into the classroom. I interpreted these experiences as having shaped her group work classroom experience. Through our discussion about the meaning of safety, and Lucielle's story about the group work class from the previous semester, I gained insight into Lucielle's pre-narrative experience to the advanced class where I first met her.

> It was [name of teacher]'s class, and all he said was, "here's the group. You guys get together and you talk." And he stepped back and took notes, which used to freak some of the classmates out. (First Meeting Transcript, p. 13).

I learned little about how this class actually transpired, but I did come to understand that my colleague placed himself in the classroom with the students in a very different way from how I worked with these same students. Classrooms are private places on the landscape. Clandinin and Connelly point out the important epistemological function of classrooms as private places:

> It is a safe place generally free from scrutiny, where teachers are free to live stories of practice. These lived stories are essentially secret ones. Furthermore, when these secret lived stories are told, they are, for the most part, told only to other teachers in still other secret places. (1995, p.13).

I understand that how teachers are in relationship with one another, and relate their classroom stories can help teachers make informed decisions about their curriculum. As I mentioned earlier, I expected to be in relationship with the students and the process. My colleague chose to work outside the students' experience. From Lucielle's narrative, I began to gain a clearer picture of just how dramatically different the curriculum that I took into the 1998 group work class was compared to students' previous experience.

Lucielle's Group Dynamic Class with the Accelerated Students

While participating in the program's first group work class, Lucielle's peers questioned her about her silence. Lucielle gave two reasons for her silence in the class where she was a student in the accelerated group.

> I said, "I don't feel like I am included. I don't feel I have the same education." [Pause]. These are the accelerated students. I got put in the accelerated group. I said, "I don't have the

> same education," and they interpreted it to mean, that they all had a university education, and so therefore, I felt inferior. These are all accelerated. So I felt that they all interpreted that I felt inferior. So I had an inferiority complex. Which made me laugh. I laughed right in the group. But they didn't get it, right. And I didn't want to explain it to them. ... They are trying to make me feel better. [The students are saying] "You know, all it is, is a ten thousand-dollar education. It just means that we are this much more in the hole, and we are the same at the core." I went, "you idiots. We are not the same." But I don't mean that I am a better person. I just mean I have more of an education, only not formal. That's what I interpreted as *not safe*. (First Meeting Transcript, p. 13 - 14).

Delving into Lucielle's life narrative and hearing stories from her childhood also sheds light on the narrative that Lucielle brought into the group work classroom in 1998. The following elementary story of an experience in group work on the continuum of Lucielle's experience may reveal narrative threads that shaped her notions of dis-ease and exclusion. In Lucielle's explanation of the group dynamics class that she completed with my colleague and the following story with the teacher character Mr. R., Lucielle stories similar plot lines.

A Childhood Group Work Story

> When I was a kid, Mr. R's class, ... I've always been a big kid. I was always bigger than most of the kids in the classroom. But when I was in grade six, I had this really cool flower-child teacher, and everyday we would have to sit in the circle and

> just talk, and just gripe, or say what ever we felt like saying. ... I used to bully the people around because no one wanted to be my friend. ... So we are sitting around this group after recess, sitting on the carpet, and the teacher says, "take it away." And a classmate raises her hand. Right. And she says, "Well, Lucielle is too pushy. I don't like the way Lucielle is." And then before you know it, the whole classroom is doing it. Right. "Oh yeah, last week she did this, and this other thing, and she took the ball from us." I'm in the room, right. ... And I didn't want to let them see me cry. And so every time we were in a group setting like that with a whole classroom, these [speaking loudly] HORRENDOUS THINGS START COMING BACK. Right... [Pause]. It stayed with me for a long time. ... And the teacher let it go. ...He said, "Does anyone else in the classroom feel that way?" ... *[Almost whispering]* "What do you think? What's going on? Why do you do these things?" I just couldn't talk because I couldn't cry, because they would win. I didn't say anything. Right. ... He [the teacher] interpreted me to be mean or offensive to him, because according to, ...He was saying, "let me hear your input." I couldn't say it. I wouldn't cry. I wouldn't" (First Meeting Transcript, p. 14 - 15).

When I asked my colleague about the students and how the courses had gone, he did not think it important to talk to me about this classroom event and Lucielle's turmoil about her position in the accelerated group work class. The teacher characters in both of Lucielle's stories seemed to "let it go" and not consider the historical dimensions of student and classroom life in the curriculum.

I asked Lucielle if she has ever cried in a classroom. In her reply, she differentiated between the in-classroom space, and the work she did with her peers outside the classroom.

> "Not because of what is going on in the classroom" she replied.

Lucielle told me about a newsletter assignment that she worked on with a small group of students. Her group met on a weekly basis.

> "And I was missing a lot of meetings. Because, (A), if it were over lunch I had to be home because my daughter was in kindergarten that year. And I couldn't, didn't have time to meet with them. I said 'you guys can come over to my place.' And they said 'No. We want to meet at the school.' But I said that I couldn't. And it was twice a week, and I missed quite a few. ... So they asked me write on the new social work legislation, which was easy for me because the president is my boss, and I interviewed him. ... I wrote a seven-page essay. ... They went complaining to the teacher that another person and me contributed nothing. ... The teacher asked if they were willing to meet, and write down everything everyone contributed. Then he wanted to meet with each of us separately and decide if we all deserve the same grade. And right when that meeting was being held, I just got off

> the phone with my ex, who threatened to take me to court and get custody of the kids. I was scared. Really, really scared. And then I go into the class and I hear them saying 'you never contributed to this.' And I said, 'Listen, you guys asked me to write this part. You printed it exactly as I wrote it, so you must have liked it. If you asked me to do something else, I would have done something else. ... I would of edited the whole damn thing. I just couldn't be meeting with you. If you wanted to come to my house.'... Right. ... And one particular classmate, who was in our [1998 group work] class too, was very adamant. She said 'you weren't there for the whole thing,' and on and on. And I just turned around and told her to fuck off. 'If you want [the teacher] to give me a D, give me a God-damn D.' At that point I walked out. I really didn't care. It was all the other crap that was happening at the time. (First Meeting Transcript, p. 15 -16).

When she finished telling me her story, I asked Lucielle if she ever spoke to the teacher. She told me she didn't. She explained her sense of discomfort with the teacher, and then added,

> "He favoured the accelerated students. It was so obvious. ... I don't know what he expected of me. But I just don't think I met whatever those expectations may have been. ... And so I didn't feel safe with him to go up and say, 'I did this.' I didn't think it mattered. I didn't think he cared. So, I really didn't

> care. I just, ... Give me my grade. I just want to pass the course. Give it to me. If it's a D, it's a D.

She said softly,

> I don't care. As long as I pass it. That's fine. (First Meeting Transcript, p. 16).

As she completed her sentence, and as her words trailed off, we sat quietly. As Lucielle and I sat in silence and she devoured the first deep drag on her cigarette, the silence seemed an appropriate counterpoint to the emotional intensity, which had reached its apex some moments before.

What Did I Learn From Lucielle?

One key question presented in my review of the adult education literature was *who is an adult?* Throughout Lucielle's narrative of her community college experience, I never questioned that she embraced herself as an adult. However, from Lucielle's perspective, and as her stories show, Lucielle did question the adult status of her peers in the full-time community college classroom. Yet, in contrast to how Lucielle perceived her peers, Lexia and Cecilia thought of themselves as adults. In my conversation with Cecilia, I asked her about the status of the students in the classroom.

> Cecilia: "I think the majority of the students would see themselves as adults. I think then there were a few who weren't adults, and who were struggling to be adults.
>
> (Interview conversation, February 7, 2001).

Unlike Lucielle, I embraced the students in the 1998 group work class as students who were adults, or who were seeking adult status in terms of entering the workplace. I thought of the students in the classroom as being just one semester away from entering their vocation. My notion of the students' futures shaped my curriculum, and my curriculum embraced the students as individuals who were at, in my opinion, varying levels of readiness for the helping profession workplace. I understand from learning about Lucielle, that her life was complex, and that this complexity shaped her relationships with students and teachers and her classroom experiences on the community college landscape.

The stories that Lucielle told about her teachers in the continuing education and full-time streams of the Helping Profession program hold narrative strands of conflict and tension. While Lucielle did allude to having relationships with teachers that were positive, I didn't learn about those experiences in detail. However, I understand from Lucielle that what mattered to her in the relationships with her teachers and field placement supervisors, was to feel heard. She wanted her teachers to acknowledge her life experience. Lucielle indicated this to me in her narrative paper when she described feeling "good" about having been drawn into the classroom discussion.

In a story about a teacher that presents a plot line of conflict and tension, Lucielle also tells a counter story. Lucielle told me about a teacher who had gone out of his way to supervise her at a field placement setting during the summer when no other teachers were available. With this teacher's gesture, Lucielle felt cared about. During her time at placement, a resident assaulted Lucielle and as a result the supervision relationship intensified. Again, Lucielle felt cared about by the teacher. At the end of the semester and at the completion of her field placement experience, Lucielle and the teacher made a verbal agreement to further explore the educative dimension of the incident. In the semester that followed, Lucielle reconstructed the teacher's care and acknowledgement into a story about a teacher who favoured the accelerated students and as someone who didn't like her. Perhaps it was this counter story that shaped Lucielle's notion that the teacher behaved as if "nothing ever happened." The agreed-upon conversation never took place. When I asked Lucielle about this teacher's perspective, she explained her understanding of the situation by relating another story of conflict that involved a group of students and this same teacher. Lucielle told me that she wasn't certain "what the teacher expected" from her.

This particular teacher story raises questions about how students can know their teachers. I have pointed to many examples of teachers knowing and not knowing their students. However, this story points to the problems and the dilemmas that can occur when students don't know their teachers, and calls into question the theoretical notion in the adult education literature about autonomous relationships (Cranton, 1992) between students and their teachers.

Lucielle encountered a range of challenges in her transition from the part-time studies to the full-time program. In her stories about her teachers in the context of the part-time continuing education program, Lucielle stories herself as standing up for her opinions and her beliefs. Lucielle also tells stories about teachers and classrooms that hold conflict and tension, and she feels positive about expressing convictions grounded in her own life experience. In her stories about teachers in the full-time program, Lucielle speaks in less-informed ways. She speculates and makes assumptions about teachers' decisions and the meaning behind their words. Over the duration of her classroom experience in the full-time program, Lucielle ceases to express herself openly to her teachers and sometimes to her peers. Through her stories, I learned that voicelessness and the concern she had prior to her return to school about not being heard, seeped back into the plot of her full-time student narrative. I interpret Lucielle's voicelessness as playing itself out in my 1998 group work classroom where she had spotty attendance (which she never spoke to me about), and her late arrivals and early departures. On one occasion when I asked Lucielle about her early leaving, she angrily responded that she had to work to pay her bills.

The complexity of Lucielle's life shaped her relationship with her teachers and the program's subject matter. One narrative cord that runs through Lucielle's stories about her assignments and the subject matter is her repeated view that she "didn't really have to try that hard," the assignments were "easy," and that she achieved high grades "without reading" the course material. When I first heard Lucielle's description of how easy the subject matter was - with no previous relationship and without knowing her narrative – I was left feeling puzzled about how these statements intersected with Lucielle's self-esteem and her reasons for wanting to "get another education."

One change Lucielle encountered, was class size. On the continuum of Lucielle's community college experience, she moved from classroom situations with five to nine students in the continuing education program, to classrooms in the full-time program where there were thirty-two to thirty-eight students. Lucielle pointed out that the students in the full-time program were younger, not adults, and that "their biggest concern was what pair of jeans to wear on Friday night."

Lucielle's experience in the community college, moving back and forth between the full-time and the part-time course offerings, is not unique. Many students use the college's flexibility to assist them in completing their program of study. Lucielle's story, of moving back and forth between the two program streams, is similar to students transferring from another college-program, or arriving from the workplace with advanced credits for their program-related experience. In other words, the traditional format of students entering a four-semester program and completing it in sequence as a group has become a thing of the past. Teachers and students enter and leave the program at any place on the continuum and this leads to a natural disruption between the students and between students and their classroom teachers. How these students embrace their own learning will shape their experience in a classroom situation. If teachers do not know their students' life narratives, the students' experience has little chance of entering into the curriculum unless the student and the teacher accepts the notion that the curriculum embraces their life experience.

Through my research with Lucielle, I attempted to understand the narrative she brought into the 1998 group work classroom. I endeavoured to learn about Lucielle's previous school and community college experiences so I could understand who she was in the group work classroom. I sought a narrative understanding of her earlier relationships with teachers and students on the community college landscape. In the time we spent together, Lucielle told me stories situated on different parts of her life's continuum. Some of those stories are included in this thesis. Lucielle's childhood story, about group work in an elementary school classroom, unveiled a narrative pattern threaded within Lucielle's life story.

I did not anticipate the resonance Lucielle's childhood stories would bring to my early school experiences. When I think about the meaning of teaching experience in my own life, I believe that my construction begins with my early school narratives. I am including these stories in honour of past teachers. Perhaps it is in the absence of my early "teacher education" that these reconstructed stories hold their relevance to a community college teacher's identity. From the time of "playing school" as a child with friends in my backyard, and then as a pupil through my elementary, junior, and high school experiences, a picture emerges containing images of teachers declaring, directing, guiding, playing, smiling and frowning. The *teacher*, throughout my early narrative and in the form of a variety of images, spoke in both soft and harsh tones. Here, I am drawing specifically on childhood memories of my kindergarten teacher. At age five, I thought her mean and crabby; in spite of this, I desperately wanted to please her. I remember thinking she did not like me because she frequently found fault with my deportment. Many years later, I learned from my parents that the inscribed image of myself as isolated and in the head-down position on a wooden desk was my punishment for walking too slowly from the school playground.

In contrast, I recall the kind gestures and the gentle appearance of my grade one teacher. I remember how the loose curls of her 1960 hairstyle fell gracefully around her face. My memory holds the warm overtones of a classroom that felt like "home." Her classroom was bright and full of colour. The bulletin boards were layered with primary colours of construction paper overlaid with student projects. The alphabet, in oversized upper and lower-case letters, was posted above the chalkboard across the front of the classroom. My connecting links to the memories of this classroom include the sweet smell of pancakes cooking in an electric fry pan (on Shrove Tuesday) permeating through the room.

Another vivid teacher image is of my grade three teacher. In her classroom, I sat in the fifth seat, row five. The distance I recall feeling between the teacher and me may be exaggerated by my memory, but I remember a feeling of isolation in that classroom. The teacher rarely moved from her desk. She sat close to the plant-filled window on the far side of the classroom. One of the few times I recollect Miss. Cole walking over to my side of the room was the day she spoke harshly to my friend Marilyn and myself; Marilyn was chastised for breaking her necklace, and me, apparently, for influencing her. The dimension of this memory is likely strengthened by the sounds of the loose beads dancing across the waxed tile floor, hitting and rebounding between the steel-tube legs of the desks, and bouncing off again. Marilyn and I had arrived at school wearing the same pearl necklaces. Having turned frequently in my seat to communicate that indeed we were wearing identical beads, my guess is Marilyn must have given the necklace one tug too many, causing the beads to ricochet across the floor, invading the silence of the classroom.

My grade four, five, and six teachers I held in high esteem. Miss. Aldridge led sing-along exercise breaks; Mr. Mayday loved to draw and paint. It seemed to me that they were both *good* teachers. But unlike Miss. Aldridge, I knew Mr. Mayday to be stern and unpredictable. I recall the feelings of fear that rumbled in my stomach on the days when Bobby G. crossed the line. I was never quite sure what Bobby G. had done, but the aural dimension of the howls from the office moments after he and Mr. Mayday left the classroom, solidify this memory. Seated by the door, I was among the first to gain sight of their faces as they entered the classroom. Mr. Mayday appeared far more wretched than Bobbie, who passed through the door first. I'm certain of the look of horror across my face. As I write this, I wonder if Mr. Mayday's deliberate kindness to me was perhaps a compensation for a child's discomfort, and his own.

My grade six teacher, Miss. Bell, sometimes called me Jacqueline, confusing me with my mother, whom she had taught 25 years before. My memories of Miss. Bell are that she was a "fine teacher," and I think of her often. Miss. Bell was not considered to be a cool or 'hip' teacher by the students. Her appearance was neat and polished. She was likely the oldest teacher in the school and I expect that she was close to retirement.

One day after lunch, I arrived to the classroom early and I sought her out. I wanted to talk to her about something that had been troubling me. As I approached the second floor classroom, the door was closed and the room appeared to be in darkness. I stretched to look through the small window in the door and inside I saw Miss. Bell with her head on her desk, asleep, or at least resting. This sight startled me. I wondered if she were ill. What had been troubling me had to wait. I had wanted to confide in her - perhaps confess what I had done to Johnny B.

He was the boy who sat behind poking, pulling and kicking me. I was in the second seat, second row from the window. When I thought Miss. Bell was fully occupied elsewhere, I would quickly turn to chastise him. I felt helplessly annoyed and distracted by him. He persisted, and finally one day I turned around and jabbed him in the upper part of his arm with my newly sharpened pencil. He yelled out. All eyes, including Miss. Bell's, were on us. Miss. Bell became stern, and inquired, "What's going on?"

I don't think her question begged an answer, and Johnny B. must have thought this, too. He responded, "*Nothing Miss. Bell,*" and with this she turned her attention elsewhere.

Johnny B. did not return to the classroom for what felt to me, a very long time. Knowing that I had left the tip of my pencil embedded in his skin, the incident began to build in my imagination. This is what I wanted to confess to Miss. Bell. I wanted to tell her how I didn't mean to do it, and how the energy seemed to swell up from inside me, and release itself. I wanted her to know that he pulled and poked at me day after day. But I did not disturb her. I quickly crept away from the door feeling a little embarrassed, and hoping frantically that no other teacher would ask what I was doing in the hallway before the afternoon bell.

Johnny B. returned to the classroom. "I'm going to tell Miss. Bell that because of you I got lead poisoning!" There it was; it was my fault. My worst fears had come true and now I was going to be misunderstood, or perhaps not heard at all. I would be blamed, and punished. I imagined the worst. *I watched him leave his desk.* He glanced back at me as he approached her,

"Miss. Bell?"

"Yes?" Her eyes were still cast downward on the workbooks.

"My mother wants me to tell you something," he said.

My stomach crashed. His mother! I held my breath as I eavesdropped on their conversation.

Then he said it,

"Beverley Brewer stabbed me with her pencil, and I got lead poisoning,
and that's why I was away from school."

After what felt like a long pause, I heard her say,

"You probably deserved it. Go back to your seat and sit down."

The early school memories, alive in my consciousness, resonate with me again now, years later. The points of tension in each of these memories takes on a new meaning as they resonate with my group work teaching experience and life stories told by my co-participants and me. In considering the distinction between school and explanations of adult education in the theoretical literature, I am struck by the similarity of my own child and adolescent school experiences to the plot lines in the community college stories told to me by Lucielle, Lexia and Cecilia. The multiple plot lines layered through their stories include negotiating relationships with teachers on the continuum of their college experience—moving through temporal periods of feeling isolated from their peers and alone in their thinking. My participants' stories encompassed milieus that were warm and chilly, safe and uncaring, not unlike those in my own childhood story. My participants talked about their imagined and perceived boundaries between themselves and their teachers. My participants spoke and wrote to me about their interpretations of their teachers' silences and tired and stern expressions. Lucielle, Lexia and Cecilia sought to please their teachers and sometimes guessed at expectations. Lucielle and Lexia, though not head-down on a desk, spoke about their personal isolation in the classroom and on the contours of the community college. Another student who did not speak to me (so I do not know what she was actually thinking), did pull her coat over her head as if to take herself outside of the classroom situation. The narrative connection about feeling heard and being in relationship with others spun through the students' and my own stories on the educational continuum and across the categorical distinctions of traditional school, adult learning, post-secondary and community college education.

Chapter Summary

I learned, how Lucielle interacted and revealed herself in the classroom, was shaped by her relationships with people and events in the Helping Profession program. When Lucielle talks about herself as a student in the part-time program, her personhood is resolute. While a student in the part-time program, Lucielle feels validated and valued. When Lucielle talks about the continuing-education program, she speaks fluently about her experience. In her narrative of experience in the full-time program, Lucielle spoke about feeling excluded, holding back her words and said to others what she thought they wanted to hear. Often times, it seemed that in the full-time program, Lucielle's identity was drowning in her turmoil with students, teachers and the program's curriculum.

In all parts of chapters six and in chapter seven and eight, I have told a research story. These narratives helped me to understand what happened in the 1998 classroom. When I began this research, I was living in my classroom at the same time that I was living the life of a beginning researcher. While in the classroom as the teacher, I had to respond to the moral dilemmas that I was encountering. As the teacher, my life extended beyond the walls of the classroom into other parts of the community college landscape. In my teaching life, I was encountering "the rhetoric of conclusions" (Schwab, 1962) funnelled (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995) into the classroom place on that landscape. The 'rhetoric' of larger class sizes, fewer class sections, open access, program partnerships, additional and reduced semesters, and Key Performance Indicators, came "down the conduit" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995) from people on the landscape who had little to do with the intimacies of classroom life. These administrative pronouncements were in conflict with this teacher's notion of a community of learners and the classroom as an intimate learning environment. From my professional practical knowledge, what I had come to know about experiential practice and learning about group work, had been jeopardized by conclusions made by people who had no relationship with the students in that classroom or intimate knowledge of these students' future world of work. Teacher knowledge and the value I put on relationships and community in the classroom had been compromised and caught in the friction of the seemingly random shifting forces on the community college landscape. The shifting qualities of the changing aspects of the landscape were forces that were in conflict, and created friction on different parts of that professional knowledge landscape. Landscape stories of conflict in the previous chapters, are examples of the variable forces of change and their effect on an already fragmented landscape. As a teacher in this research story, I was living on this fragmented landscape.

In chapter nine, the final chapter of my thesis, I reiterate my justification for undertaking this research into the community college. I highlight teaching touchstones embedded in the continuum of my experience as a long-time community college teacher and a beginning narrative researcher. I highlight what I have come to understand about the meaning of my past teaching experience to my evolving teacher identity. I point to the relationship between an evolving teacher identity and the temporal interactions among people, places and events on the changing professional knowledge landscape of the community college. I emphasize current gaps in higher education and adult education research and the need to embrace actual community college experience in scholarly discourse and academic debate

Chapter Nine

Terra Incognita

Complexities of the community college teachers' evolving identity, in relationship to shared curriculum among students and their teachers – both inside and outside the classroom – and the temporal entanglement of everyday experience in community college life, are unveiled in this thesis. Experience for teachers and students, who live their lives, inside and outside the classroom, on a shifting community college landscape in a changing social world, is not addressed in adult education theoretical discourse or the higher education theoretical literature. In the current panorama of the community college, aberration, compliance and indifference prevail. With morale at an all-time low, there is a desperate need to put 'community' and relationship back into the community college and to focus on the evolving identity of the community college teacher on a landscape that is constantly changing. Throughout my thesis, I write about life on a community college landscape. I have guided the reader along the continuum of my teaching journey from 1979 to 2001, in view of twenty-one years teaching experience in the colleges. In this thesis I have focused on my own teaching life and the lives of my students. My community college stories embrace temporal qualities and historical details. My thesis is a landscape study. I navigate the complex professional knowledge landscape of the community college. Engaging the term *landscape* metaphorically, I have been thinking about the community college as a moral and intellectual place. I delve into the tensions and the intensity of relationships between students, teachers and curriculum as lived experience.

The stories in my thesis point to the challenges and dilemmas of applying *curriculum as lived experience*. I have spoken about curriculum that is broken and a teacher identity that is unravelling among the fragments of change on the college landscape. I use the concreteness of the community college context and my own experience on that landscape to talk about teacher/student relationships, teacher identity and community, and, curriculum and adult education. Conceiving the community college in terms of a professional knowledge landscape, I have disclosed responses to what goes on inside and outside the classroom and feelings of discomfiture. I have shown the relationship and interaction among the people who, over time, live and work through events and transitions on the terrain of the community college.

I have written about the interaction between my experience in the community college system and what I came to know about adult education. My stories embrace adult learning theories and methods that are experientially based and general education literature on teaching. I have considered principles of adult education that once worked in my classroom. My early adoption of the grand narratives of adult education theoretical concepts and my literature search are pivotal to my study.

Teaching Touchstones Identity: Community, Conversation and Curriculum

In my childhood wishes and adolescent dreams I wanted to be a schoolteacher. In chapter one of my thesis, I tell the story about not going to teachers' college, and how I fell into community college teaching. In the first eight years of my teaching journey, I worked at three different community colleges in community based adult education programs. I referred to these years as my teaching apprenticeship. Through these experiences in experiential education, I was introduced to Dewey's notion of situation and experience, school as a form of community life, living and moral training, and continuity between school, society and home. Within these early years, I meet the women educators from who I learn to value teacher communities of dialogue. These meaningful conversations took place on and off the landscape, over lunches and dinners, shared times at professional conferences and summer cottages. The community life of the college program extended into the relationships among the teachers I worked with in 1980 to 1988. The students I worked with during these times – Alex, John, Larry and Alice, led complex lives that resulted in challenging teaching/learning experiences for us as teachers. Through writing and thinking narratively about these early teaching experiences, it becomes clear that the intimate relationship among teachers, subject matter and place, serves as a web holding and sustaining mentorship for the work we did together with our students.

In the first chapter of my thesis, I looked back on my beginning experiences in teaching as a kind of utopia embedded in my teaching narrative. I have come to understand these beginning experiences as central to my professional identity as a community college teacher. Through my inquiry into my own teacher narrative, I came to know the significance and influencing presence of my teacher knowledge and experience, from an earlier time, to my evolving teacher identity. I discovered this personal finding key to a teacher identity that was unravelling among the fragments of change on a shifting institutional landscape.

Shifting Fragments Shape Relationships

Teachers and their Administrators

In the time that I have been in the colleges, the world has changed around my classroom and around me. The college has migrated from its original practice of hiring teachers who were experts in their field. Individuals are now teaching program content unrelated to their area of expertise, thus creating discrepancies in content and subject matter. Departmental collapse and changes to the administration have taken place. The shift from academic to corporate management styles has resulted in programs supervised by program managers who have not acquired the knowledge base of the discipline. The physical attributes of many classrooms do not adhere to increased student numbers. Class size and high student enrollment are not always conducive to controversial subject matter and the temporal quality and physical space required for students to delve into their personal narratives and explore beyond their certainties. These shifts have broadened and deepened the gap between community college teachers and their administrators.

Relationships among Teachers and their Students

Teachers' lives, still, for the most part, are lived in the classroom. The shifting temporal quality of teachers' lives on the community college landscape has changed how teachers know their classrooms and their students. Changing qualities of the landscape also shift how students come to know their teachers. My thesis recognizes particular conditions that affect teachers and life in the community college classroom. The pragmatics of conceptualizing the classroom-as-community has become a challenging endeavour in our changing world. To make my point, I consider the fences in my neighbourhood, which are constructed taller and tighter. Sharing this observation with my husband, who remarked, "Not too conducive to community building," I consider the tall fences in relation to my classroom and the obstacles that impede communication and preclude face-to-face dialogue with students, in similar ways that neighbours and other people passing by, go unnoticed. Our social world holds many examples of communities that are broken, fragmented and threatened by physical, spacial and temporal structures. Inspiring classrooms toward *a community of learners* is difficult with fewer examples to draw from both inside and outside the community college landscape. The stories that I have told in my thesis about students, teachers and the curriculum, show that experience meaningful to the student's future is embedded in individuals knowing and understanding individual people's life narratives. With dwindling resources available to the community college, I have found it necessary to draw on earlier teaching stories and to think about the past community-building practices that support teachers in the work they do with their students now and in the future.

Informal Education Brings Life to the Formal Classroom

In chapter two, thinking narratively about Elizabeth's work in the Innu community and my work with my students in the post-secondary classroom, a plot line appears amid the theoretical distinction between formal and informal education. As Elizabeth's story of community resonates with my past experiences of working within *community of teachers*, I recognize that this plot line disappeared from my own story of experience. I wrote that Elizabeth's story of her fight for the Innu, 'filled a gap' in our curriculum. Initially, I considered this gap in terms of an actual story of life experience directly related to subject matter. My incentive to invite the Innu women to the classroom was embedded in my intention to provide a real-life example of a collaborative effort among women advocates, who were living a story of social change. The meaning of the Innu women's story and their visit to my classroom has undergone several reconstructions over the duration of my thesis writing journey. The narrative awakening that I am left with, at this stage of my thinking, is that my invitation to the Innu women was about my own need, as a teacher, to bring community into my classroom and also into my community college teaching life.

In chapter two, I present a story about a car ride with foggy windows, an impending collision, and anticipation that all could go wrong. This car ride story became my working metaphor as I thought about the changes on the continuum of my teaching life. The highway that we travelled between the campus locations, can be considered metaphorically, as a narrative plot line, moving through a continuum of teaching experience across the distinctions between informal, formal and non-formal education as written about in the adult education literature. My 1999-classroom story of the Innu women's visit, resonates with the experience of crossing philosophical borders and physical boundaries in my own teaching life. Writing my thesis while off the landscape, and delving into the narrative of my earlier teaching life has allowed me to pause and notice patterns and narrative strands among the theoretical distinctions of informal, formal and non-formal education. I understand that the key distinction is temporal space. I have come to understand that the feelings of loss –erupting from the contrasts of my own teaching situation – to how I understood Elizabeth's story, as an informal educator was created, from living among the temporal dimensions of a dislodged fragment on a 1999 community college landscape.

Adult Education Theoretical Principles: Adrift on a Shifting Landscape

When teaching in community based programs (at the inception of my teaching career) and during my initial experiences in post-secondary education, I discovered connections between adult education theoretical principles and practical classroom experience (Cranton, 1992, 1989; Brookfield, 1980; Mezirow, 1981, 1977; Knowles, 1980; Brundage and Mackeracher, 1980; Tough, 1975). For example, from 1988 to 1995, when I introduced the theory of an autonomous teacher/student relationship to my curriculum, my students were coached in acquiring new ways to think about relationships with their teachers. Individuals engaged in exploratory discourse that revealed a philosophical and pragmatic comparison between self-directed and teacher-directed learners. Over the duration of the semester, the students in post-secondary classrooms also experimented with collaborative learning and practiced the conception of teachers and peers as learning partners. In these earlier contexts, each learner's past experience was recognized as a valuable resource to others and to their own learning. Often times, student tension evolved out of the desire to hold onto previous learning habits and foregoing approaches to the subject matter and the people in the classroom. Classroom situations, which were then, three hours in length and with fewer people enrolled, permitted the students to explore and move beyond discomfort and tension rooted in these transformative learning experiences. These particular concepts, embedded in the adult education literature, can be seen as connecting to and addressing an earlier in-classroom experience on the community college landscape. There are no stories of practice that pertain to actual classroom life and the current changing landscape on which, the post-secondary community college institution, is situated.

My impetus for a community college landscape study came about as a result of my completing of the Bachelor of Education degree in Adult Education at Brock University. At that time, it became apparent to me that there was dissonance between the conceptual underpinnings of the theoretical approach to adult education and the reality, as it was lived, in the community college classroom. With a community college system that is constantly changing in a world that continues to evolve in an ever-accelerating fashion, classroom life has been significantly impacted. As a result of significant changes in the community college system, I believed there was a need for research that more appropriately reflected the teaching and learning environment within the classroom.

Through my review of the adult education literature (chapter three), I saw no attention to landscape as a moral and intellectual place where students, teachers and administrators live their lives both inside and outside the classroom. The adult education literature is conceptual in the abstract sense and does not acknowledge temporality and changing aspects of the landscape's physical practicalities of shortened semesters, fewer hours of instruction and increased student numbers. These community college features compete with the students' potential to actualize an autonomous relationship with their teachers. At the same time, as I provide my students with practice skills in moving along the continuum from being a learner who is teacher-directed to someone who is self-directed, I have come to feel uncertain about endorsing principles of adult learning. In the 1998 group class situation, (introduced in chapter five and written about in chapters six and seven), when I behaved as a teacher in what I considered as respecting students as adults, I experienced my classroom as disturbing and full of conflict. A tension erupted between my conceptual notion of students as adults and the way the classroom actually unfolded when I approached the students this way. Through my narrative inquiry into the temporality of my teaching life and my particular focus on the 1998 group work classroom, I found a tension between my notions of what it means to treat students as adults and the practical realities of doing so in the classroom. The adult education literature is a hypothetical world. With shifting demographics and a changing landscape, theories of practice that at one time seemed to apply, no longer work. In chapter four, in the story, *Life without PAL (Principles of Adult Learning),* I address the loss I felt when PAL was excluded from the curriculum of the Helping Profession program. In writing about this loss, my thesis has eulogized PAL.

After my extensive literature review and attendance at an adult education academic conference, where I went looking for justification and grounding of my work, I felt academic and professional isolation. It was painful to get into the adult education literature and participate at adult education conferences, and not see my experience. I was left further adrift from a teacher identity that had evolved since 1980, when I was an adult educator, who focused on curriculum. From my review of the adult education literature and my attendance at academic conferences in adult education, I find that the concern and the issues in the lives of community college teachers, and their classrooms, are not being addressed. The adult education field is primarily concerned with social justice, social action and other important issues in the world. However, the field is not dealing with change in the life of the community college educator. In a sense, I have been disheartened as a practitioner interested in community college teachers' lives and their classroom life. The adult education literature is not a home for me as a community college educator who is seeking further affirmation about my teacher identity and change within my teaching and learning landscapes.

Seeking Theoretical Connections on an AERA Landscape

At the April 2000 American Education Research Association (AERA) conference in Seattle, the categorization of the adult learner continued to dominate research conversations. At a first-time AERA session, accelerated programs were discussed, from a theoretical perspective. In their presentation, the researchers from Regis College, predicted that by 2015, twenty-percent of all students in American universities/colleges would be in accelerated program formats. The theorists' panel-conversation pointed to concern about economic development and occupational functions of the American colleges. The theorists' conversations about accelerated programs focussed primarily on university/college transfers. The research conversations did not include actual life experience as lived by teachers and students.

I listened to the theoretical conversation with interest and considered my own experience working in and studying an accelerated program situation. In Ontario and other provinces in Canada, with the surge of university and college partnerships, have come accelerated programs and a new set of challenges faced by community college teachers and students in the classroom. Over the past five years, colleges in Ontario have entered into another debate that parallels and furthers this force of change. My study of the 1998 classroom reveals challenges faced by community college teachers in their classrooms and in their relationships with students. Through the lens of the students in my study and the teacher, who was also the researcher, the 1998 narrative experience of merging accelerated students with traditional-program students in the classroom was in contrast to Scott and Conrad's (1992) theoretical notion that accelerated programs will not diminish the curriculum. Embedded in the narrative of the group work classroom experience, are stories of change, chaos and collision. There are also stories of disruptions to program content – the condensed and hurried-summer semester did not support adequate time for the accelerated students to actually digest and apply theoretical perspectives with experiential classroom activity.

My study reveals the complex interaction among individual students and their life narratives, coming together and shaping experience in the classroom. In terms of curriculum as life experience, the interaction among students and their teachers, shapes community college curriculum. The curriculum is shaped by relationships among students and each of one of their teachers who work together on the four-semester continuum of the program's subject matter, on a shifting institutional landscape in a changing social world. My study identifies the need to be sensitive to the narrative history of groups of students learning together in cohorts for curriculum and program planning.

Seeking Theoretical Connections in Higher Education Literature

In the process of positioning my landscape study and this inquiry into how teacher and student identities are shaped by the shifting community college landscape, I went beyond the adult education literature and pursued the academic discourse of community colleges and higher education. Higher education's major studies, which focus primarily on policy, administration and leadership, do not embrace classroom life or the actual experience of the individuals who are teaching and learning within the community college system. In the community college literature, there are a number of statistical studies discussing inputs and outputs. Again, I found a lack of research pertaining to my inquiry. By bringing a more pragmatic account of community college life to the literature, policy decisions (that impact teachers, students and life inside and outside the classroom) will be grounded in actual experience.

Seeking Continuity of Experience in the Adult Education Literature

In chapter three, where I review the literature, I am also interested to understand how continuity is embraced in the adult education literature. From my review of the literature, I realize that Dewey's notion of continuity and life-long learning and a person's prior experience in the learning situation are abandoned, and seamlessness between school and adult education is criticized. The notion of continuity of experience and personal history is integral to the interaction with the person's past, present and future. This crucial component is ignored in the adult education literature. Though continuity is prevalent in the adult education literature, a person's past school learning situation is abandoned, and it is discontinuity that actually prevails. Lucielle's childhood story about group work in elementary school classroom unveiled parallel experiences between Lucielle's early school experience and her community college classroom. A narrative understanding of my own childhood school experiences, narrativized in chapter eight, uncovers narrative connections and links between my own childhood stories and my community college teaching experience. My stories speak to Dewey's *interaction of experience* in a person's life learning. Dewey's notion of continuity of experience is made apparent through these narrative connections.

Narrative Dimensions, Shifting Fragments and Community College Teacher Identity

As shown in my thesis, many aspects of the adult education literature influenced my teaching practice and my intended relationships with students. Though I understand identity not to be a monolith, through my thesis I came to acknowledge that I was embracing my past teacher stories as *established* – and the notion that my teacher identity was entrenched. I had fixed notions of engaging in relationship, acknowledging experience and learning from my students. I was happy to listen and engage in their life stories. I also liked to take the time to talk to the students about approaching differences of opinion and working within diversity. This is my professional practical knowledge shaped by my early experience and what I took from the adult education literature available to me. From my thesis inquiry, I have come to understand that the stories of experience, which I brought to the 1998 group work classroom, were embedded in the narrative of my teaching experience as teacher-stories-to-by. From the first day of the semester and forward, my teaching-stories-to live-by, were in relationship with the dynamic between my teaching narrative and the interaction among the students and their intermingling stories of experience. The unforeseen, yet looming collisions re-shaped my teacher stories to live by.

In this thesis, I delve beyond my sense of obtaining an established teacher identity into a teacher identity that feels interrupted and unsettled. The risk for a long-time teacher, who acknowledges superficial changes to the college landscape, becomes demystified through the many reconstructions and narrative interpretations of my teaching stories told over time. Through telling and reconstructing my 1998 group work story, (that unfolds in chapter five, all parts of chapter six, and in chapter seven), I understand the significance for community college teachers to know themselves. I conceive that this teacher knowing shapes the story of experience lived out in the teacher's classroom. However, without considering changes to the landscape from a narrative perspective, chaos and collision, seemingly ungrounded, can dissolve a teacher's identity in terms of teaching stories to live by. A narrative understanding of the landscape includes contemplating the temporal dimension of movements among particular fragments of the landscape – and considering the temporal dimension and motion of shifting fragments are not always in synch with one another –chaos and collisions erupt on the landscape. As revealed in the 1998 group work story, it is within this chaos and the colliding forces that students become unsettled about living on community college ground that is shifting. As well, it is within the temporality of these colliding forces on the college landscape that a teacher's identity can become unravelled.

Off-the-Landscape and Out-of-Classroom Places Brings Meaning to Teacher Identity

The community college must be understood as a complex place in a changing social world. The professional knowledge landscape of the community college embodies the mundane and everyday activity and the life narratives of people interacting on the institution's terrain. To understand the intellectual and moral dimensions of the ever-changing community college dynamic, the meaning that actual teaching and learning has to individual people and the larger social world, must be understood attending to actual life experience inside and outside the classroom, and, on and off the landscape. Out-of-classroom places and in-classroom places make up the landscape. In the adult education literature, there is little attention to the professional life of teachers and the decisions they make outside the classroom and off the landscape. My study acknowledges that community college teachers live part of their professional lives outside of the classroom and in communal places. To understand life experience on the community college landscape, both inside and outside the classroom, narrative attention to relationship among students, teachers and their administrators must be invested to know how to bring community back into the fabric of the community college system.

Technology, people coming and going, management styles and philosophies are all components that make up that landscape. Some aspects of the landscape are changing faster and more dramatically than others. One component on the community college landscape that is spoken about as moving at a rapid pace is the innovative technologies, web-based curriculum and distance-education programming. These technological innovations, along with international growth and global institutional partnerships, are highly valued components by some people on the community college landscape. In the excitement of these changing fragments, I too, have come to embrace these valued components with interest and enthusiasm. At the same time, beyond the appropriate use of technology, a community college teacher's life still involves taking the students who attend classes in their programs and trying their best to prepare these students for entry into their futures. Classroom life and teachers' lives are shaped by subject matter content and students' access and skills using computer and technology resources on and off the community college landscape. On-going direction and discussion around computer problem-solving is an additional dynamic among the already complex classroom interaction. At the same time, statistical records of student placement and workplace employment are a central topic of the college's concern. However, these notions are not as intrinsically or centrally connected to the larger story of change on the community college landscape. Decisions made outside the classroom, by people who do not directly work in the diversity of the classroom space and directly with the changing nature of the students entering the college, however, they make decisions that shape classroom life.

Discrepancies and Friction on Landscape Fragments

The changes and shifts on the community college landscape that I have spoken about have not occurred in any orchestrated or rhythmic way. Among two of the random shifts that I wrote about was the elimination of the curriculum Principles of Adult Learning (PAL) (chapter four) and the threat of the program's closure (chapter seven). Often times, the changes experienced in the program curriculum are haphazard, dislocated, and experienced as dislodged events for the teaching faculty and their students. There is variation in the same program's subject matter and discrepancy from one area of the college to another. The thrust of change experienced in the Helping Profession program (the threatened closure, three locations in the temporal period of two years, and a new administrator) was out-of-synch with the careful consideration required for the development and implementation of a new and additional program. As shown in Lucielle's story and in other stories throughout my thesis, the intersection between these fragments of change creates chaos, confusion and friction in students' and their teachers' lives.

The Classroom Place, Group Work and Temporal Change

As revealed in my stories about teaching in the community college, there is a general ethos in adult education about the acceptance of group work. Brookfield (1989) has criticized the assumptions and commonplace practices of group learning in adult education, and proposes these conditions appeal to a theoretical teaching situation only. My earlier teaching experience in the context of community based programs, reveals consequences of using an andragogical approach, group learning, and a feminist perspective as guides in my practice that were both effective and rewarding. I have also experienced these rewards in post-secondary classrooms in the past. Apps' (1991) explanation captures how I had hoped to engage with the students in my classroom:

> An approach to teaching adults where you, the teacher, engage your entire personality, how you think, what you know and how you know it, and how you feel and why you feel that way. I emphasize a teaching approach that involves the entire learner, too - feelings, thoughts, relationships, backgrounds, values, beliefs, everything that makes a person unique (p.1).

In more recent years, my teaching experience has been in the context of an institutional landscape that superficially embodies philosophical perspectives in the andragogical and feminist approaches to learning have shifted. What I learned about teaching adults no longer brings meaning to the curriculum in the community college classroom on the changing landscape. Among the components of the past experiences that were different for the teacher in the 1998 group work situation were full student attendance, smaller classes, intimate classroom spaces, teacher conversations, and an established campus setting.

Teacher and student narratives were in collision with a community college landscape that was also changing. Previous stories of experience, lived out by students and the teacher, were out of synch with the changing plot line of the college's evolving story. The lives of students and teachers were not in harmony with the changing landscape. Turing again to Dewey, I am reminded about the individual social dialectic in the classroom:

> Inner harmony is attained only when, by some means, terms are made with the environment. When it occurs on any other "objective" basis, it is illusory... (Dewey, 1934/1958, p. 17).

Community College Students and Their Busy Lives

Throughout my thesis, I have told stories about living among the frictions of temporal change on the community college landscape. One issue I talk about throughout my thesis is the changing nature of the students who are entering the community college classroom. Embedded in my stories, are the plot lines of the students' busy lives. Similar to my participant Lucielle, many full-time community college students have complex familial relationships, along with jobs that extend beyond part-time hours. I am concerned about this shift in community college teacher's lives, on a landscape that doesn't seem to acknowledge or value the range of student life narratives entering the learning situation that make up and influence the classroom experience. From the students in the 1998 group work class, my stories revealed that their lives are complex, both inside and outside the classroom, and on and off the landscape. The complexity of students' lives shapes program attendance, relationships in the classroom and how students engage with subject matter and their teachers inside and outside the classroom. My classroom study suggests that teachers do not know their students.

My teacher identity was grounded in my past community based teaching experience where I sought, as a teacher, to embrace the classroom as community and I took this story to live by to the group work classroom. While in the classroom, I looked to enter into a relationship with the students. In contrast, as one student told me, "the students want to fight with you." Though, it was only three or four students (it seemed like more) who wanted to fight, the conflict was a powerful source to reckon with. I entered the group work classroom with the notion, like in previous semesters, the students would work toward community. Nonetheless, as I interpreted the experiences written about in all parts of chapter six, *A Post-Secondary Classroom, Collision, Chaos and Transition in Three Acts*, the students attempted to keep their individual learning experience separate from one another. Similar to the taller fences in my neighbourhood, the actions of the students enrolled in the subject did not lend themselves to moving toward community in ways that Alice and Judy's story – written about in chapter one – embraced relationship, disclosure and shared problem solving. As well, my intent to extend the subject matter beyond what I understood the students to know about group work, collided with the distance that some students were willing to go in their relationships with one another and in their own learning.

Since writing about my 1998 classroom experience, faculty members in Helping Profession programs throughout the province of Ontario, in response to classroom chaos and collisions, have implemented a *Student Code of Conduct* developed by the professional body of *The Ontario Social Service Worker Educators* (Appendix C). The decision that shaped this document's content, holds echoes of Sandra's classroom story about students' disruptive behaviour and the voices of community college teachers embedded in the 1999-college survey (chapter seven). In chapter seven, I also pointed to a first-time announcement, delivered by the Director of Student Services' at the inception of the 2001-fall semester, to faculty members about classroom disruption and student hostility. I took the director's action as a *narrative sign* to a changing pattern of students attending the colleges. My study shows, the nature of the community college student, has changed. Statistics, disclosed at a faculty meeting in October, 2001, show that18% of first-semester students enrolled in one college's Helping Profession program, have been identified as students "special learning needs" and therefore, granted specific learning accommodations. I am concerned about these shifts in community college teacher's lives on a terrain that doesn't seem to acknowledge or value the range of "competing moral positions" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1995, p.32) that make up and influence the professional knowledge landscape.

Community College Life Among Fragments-in-Motion and Histories That Are Changing

Using narrative research and autobiographical inquiry methods, I have delved into particular classroom experiences on the continuum of my twenty-year teaching career on a community college professional knowledge landscape. I have tried to understand some of the complexities of teacher and student life in classrooms. I have also attempted to understand some of the contradictions embedded in my own teaching stories-to-live-by on the community college landscape. My endurance in the strife of the 1998-semester classroom was guided by my eagerness to find ways to build and maintain community. I understood that the students' successful future, in the helping profession workplace, were dependent on their relationship and community-building skills. My sense of how the classroom shaped the larger community college landscape outside the classroom is constrained. In reflection, I see how isolated the teacher was from considering the individual life narratives of program colleagues and also understanding the changing narrative of the community college landscape.

The narrative connections between my early history and my more recent past have given me insight into the missing piece of the puzzle: the *I*. The shifts, which I felt within, are not only embedded in change, as I had assumed, but in a subtle process of reconnecting the narrative fibers of my own history. Community colleges also have histories; these histories change over time. These changes, as shown throughout the stories in my thesis, are not just surface tremors to the landscape. These changes are always taking place; some of the shifts to the landscape are deeper than others and change the purpose of community college education. As the organization shifts, the profession identity of teachers is also shaken. In some areas of the college, new language has been adopted in memos and formal documentation. In the departments of Admissions, Human Resources, Registration and Strategic Planning, the terms, student and learner have been replaced with *client*, *customer* and *stakeholder*. The adoption of these new terms shapes two relationships: the student/teacher relationship and the student's relationship to learning. For teachers who care how the curriculum shapes their students' futures, there is grave dissatisfaction. From the teacher's discontentment, new stories of experience are told. These new stories shape experience in the classroom. In their work, Connelly and Clandinin's (1999) show that "teachers' working lives are shaped by stories-to-live-by and that these stories-to-live-by compose teacher identity" (p. 94). My story about PAL, the Principles of Adult Learning course, became one of my stories-to-live-by. After leaving her unfulfilling high school teaching job, Sandra entered the community college scene and encountered disparity among classroom cover stories, the post-secondary classroom stories she hoped to live by and her actual classroom experience. Both Sandra and I were living on a fragmented and shifting ground where our teacher identities were no longer supported by the landscape's conditions. From a narrative perspective, "identities have histories" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1999, p. 95). Sandra and I lived stories of conflict and tension as the individual histories of our teaching identities unravelled among the changes to the community college landscape.

Seeking a Pathway of Hope for the Future

A recent informal conversation [May 11, 2001], with two community college women educators, informs my question: What is creating the sense of an impending collision and that all could go wrong? The conversation began with greetings and general catching up on one another's lives. As I was describing my thesis, in response to my colleague's query, both women looked at one another, and smiled.

> *"Detachment. We have been talking all afternoon about how to stay detached."*

The other woman added, "Yes. Go in. Teach. Get out. Stay detached."

The future dimension of the dialogue between these two women educators does not hold hope for the community college classroom. The narrative history of this conversation has shaped how these teachers see themselves on the landscape. A depleted sense of belonging and community college teachers' feelings of displacement are referred to in all parts of chapter six, and given evidence to in Jerry White's (1999) study, *Voices from the Classroom.* Among these teacher voices and conversations there is a sense that, indeed, the community college teaching/learning situation is heading for a collision.

In chapter seven, I write about the narrative pieces of the classroom puzzle that revealed themselves as I delved behind the scenes of the actual classroom experience. I storied the changes on the community college landscape and made narrative connections to the group work classroom experience. I am troubled by the restrictions of applying *curriculum as lived experience* in the classroom and the teacher's notion of working toward a *community of learners* in the classroom. As community colleges shift to resemble corporate business structures and move away from the focus on students' learning in the classroom, the situation does not support classrooms as learning communities. As shown in the group work classroom story (all parts of chapter six), individual students' needs and values challenge the notion of a learning community. The teaching and learning and teacher stories brought forward, from my past, by narrative inquiry and autobiographical research methodologies, suggest reasons to re-visit approaches to building community inside our classrooms, with our students, and, outside the classroom with our colleagues and administrators.

In chapter eight, Lucielle's story unfolds. Her story reveals border crossings and how she felt on the margins as she moved between the continuing education, traditional and accelerated community college programs. Lucielle's stories about her relationship to the subject matter and her peers and teachers unveiled tension and her feelings of marginalization. Cecilia and Lexia told stories that divulged their desire for structure and their quest for certainty. From her community college experience, Lexia had expectations of new friendships, campus social events and the feeling of belonging to a community. Inside the classroom, Cecilia pursed familiarity and harmony with her peers – at any cost.

As well, beyond Lucielle's harsh words and her story line about not liking or respecting her classmates, Lucielle desperately sought acceptance and belonging.

Life Plot Lines of the Learning Continuum

In fictional writing, plot lines change – they can appear, disappear and re-appear again. In the process of writing my thesis, I learned that when I ceased to think narratively, plot lines seemed only to disappear. Throughout my thesis journey, I have come to know that by *thinking narratively,* the temporal dimension of life patterns and prevailing threads, embodied in the unity of the story of experience, becomes unveiled. The scenes from my own childhood stories of school experience (chapter eight) are analogous to the plot lines and narrative filaments that emerge in my participants' stories of community college experience.

The relationship between student and teacher, the struggle for student voice, visibility and inclusion, and the provisional bonds of trust were compromised, for Lucielle, by the dramatic shifts on the landscape. The overlapping plot lines of my childhood school stories and my participant's reconstruction of her community college learning experience show that the pencil-stabbing uncertainties that generate anger and fear, about everyday teaching and learning, play out across the narrative continuum of educational experience. My own narrative, and the connections I make, show my readers that school stories and adult teaching, learning and educational research stories are powerfully intertwined at many different levels. The wretched visage of Mr. Mayday and his struggle with Bobbie G., resembles my colleague Sandra's, disappointment about leaving high school teaching to work in a community college classroom, where she is again disheartened about having to discipline her students. Classroom events shape the teachers' and students' experience. Landscape issues influence teacher/student relationships. As with Mr. Maday and Sandra, the students' behaviour shaped the teacher's decisions and responses.

Narrative tones of conflict among students, tired and aging teachers, and teachers' discomfort with student conflict ring through my classroom and student school and community college stories. The sounds of the bouncing beads ricocheting throughout the grade-three classroom and the impending doom and helplessness at being wrongly judged echoed a student/teacher relationship similar to Lucielle's, who embraced the sense that her teachers judged and could not empathize with the complexity of her life experience. The resemblance across the continuum of experience, as shown through the rhythms and unities embedded in traditional school and community college stories, suggests the need to re-think how community college experience is to be included beyond formalistic distinctions and in the adult and higher education discourse.

As the student's experience moves forward on the continuum, between the classroom and the workplace, the plot line running through the student/teacher relationship shifts. Teachers' work with students at the interface of their life in the classroom and their entry into their work life also shifts. Temporality shapes this relationship plot line. Student and teacher narratives become reshaped as teacher and student identities evolve, often raising uncertainty, new questions and challenges.

Teacher as Researcher, Researcher as Teacher

Throughout my thesis, I was living the intimacy of my research and living within the dilemmas of finding ways to live on the researcher /teacher continuum. I write about this relationship in chapter five. Contemplating the dialectic of the researcher and the teacher (in my case, one and the same in a single classroom), I found myself noticing one of my cats as he suckled and kneaded the wool blanket that was draped across my lap as I wrote in my journal. I was tempted to reach out and touch him so that I could share in the experience of his apparent comfort. But I resisted and decided not to interfere, and instead I continued to wonder for a while longer about his mysterious behaviour.

As my cat continued to purr, knead, and suckle, I watched the interconnection of movement through his body and joints of his spine… until he hears the sounds of my second cat in his food bowl. He stops… appears to listen, and I wonder what he will do next. While rooted in the moment of my cat's movement, I considered the tensions in the narrative of my classroom experience. I think of Crites, "… that "I" am rooted in a past with which I remain in some sense identical. This sense is reinforced when a lacuna is filled in; for instance when a visual image comes powerfully to mind that has been forgotten. (1986, p. 156). Crites (1986) continues,

> 'My' self with its personal past takes form out of just such networks of analogous experience present and remembered. In the second place, experience is itself mediated by coded sound, image, language, all

> presupposing a vast logical processing of such forms, perhaps long antedating the awakening of the personal self to consciousness (p. 158).

Considering Crites' thinking, I am reminded that, as the researcher, I have indulged in my discomfort of one teaching and learning situation. Crites reminds me to consider the sounds, images and language *beyond* my recent experience, and learn from the *pitfalls* and my personal lacuna in terms of the mysteries and puzzles embedded in the community college classroom.

> A coherent life of experience is not simply given, or a track laid down in the living. To the extent that a coherent identity is achievable at all, the thing must be made, a story-like production with many pitfalls, and it is constantly being revised, sometimes from beginning to end, from the vantagepoint of some new situation of the "I" that recollects. (Crites, 1986, p. 160).

An Awakening

Crites (1986) points out that a painful case of self-deception, unveiled through story, is involved in all identity formation. A tension that perhaps went unrecognized, or maybe ignored, became unveiled as my inquiry into my sense of myself as a teacher took its form in my journals, field notes, field texts and thesis writing. Not until it became apparent in my writing, did I realize the impact of policy and decision-making stories embedded in the out-of-classroom landscape. What became unveiled was the significance of the out-of-classroom landscape on the relationships *inside* the classroom. Of course, as a teacher I felt the impact of the out-of-classroom landscape on my classroom. I could simply choose to close the door, do my own thing, and feel resolved about the privacy of my classroom and the stories that as a teacher I will quietly keep to myself. It is this isolation and my dismay with classroom tensions and chaos that brought me to study and inquire more deeply into the classroom, community college life, and evolving teacher identity.

Crites (1986) suggests that we become most aware of the break beneath the tensions in our lives when we are accused of a transgression, or an "embarrassing offense" (p. 159). Recently, I felt accused about being a teacher who clung to old values in the face of a changing landscape. These words were like the objects in Crites' terms that shook my consciousness. For Crites, "consciousness awakens" as the objects materialize "through images and visual fragments, stories and bits of narrative, sounds, patterns of movement, colours and smells and tastes" and they are brought together in a larger aesthetic configuration that harvests experience (Crites, 1979, p. 124). It became evident to me, through the eyes of others that I was living on the continuum of my teaching narrative, and not distanced enough from my teaching to be a researcher. Do I call this dance with my narrative memories of people, places and events and my work in the classroom where I have been the teacher and the researcher, in Crites terms, a dance of *self- deception*?

Throughout my thesis inquiry, and especially when teaching in the classroom and researching that same context, my research experience was shaped by my teacher identity, as my researcher identity continued to be cultivated over time. As the teacher in this story, I was living on a fragmented landscape. I was living the intimacy of my research. I was living dilemmas in finding ways to live on the teacher/researcher continuum. As the researcher in this story, I lived and likely will continue to re-story and reconstruct the dilemmas of living and researching within the teacher/researcher dialectic. In narrative research, there are few examples to draw on for the teacher/researcher dialectic.

I wrote about the dilemma of choosing participants among my own students (chapter five). In the context of my urge as a budding narrativist and researcher who wanted to move forward in the co-construction of the researcher/participant relationship, new questions evolved about the nature of the teacher/researcher dialectic in narrative research. These questions are part of my larger research program for exploration after completing this thesis.

Through this narrative inquiry into my own life teaching-experience, my teacher identity has been reconstructed. I moved from the comfort of knowing what to call myself: educator, life skills coach, teacher - to using the terms "teacher" and "educator" interchangeably, depending on who I was talking to. Given my narrative vocabulary of border crossing, rhythms, threads and temporality, and my use of the terms curriculum, student and teacher, my paradigm is on a collision course with the adult education theoretical perspective. This collision is a useful starting point to a conversation that has no pre-defined goal.

Rather than insisting that my language be defined in the same terms as in the language in the theoretical adult education literature, both sets of terms can be re-thought following Thomas Kuhn. In his structure of scientific revolutions, Kuhn named the terms as incommensurable languages – languages that point to each other's eventual extinction (as Galileo's language pointed to the eventual extinction of Pytolomy's language of astronomy). Further, rather than accept the extinction of the philosophical underpinnings and theoretical perspectives of courses like PAL from the community college curriculum, we need to acknowledge the need for a new and open conversation with no pre-defined goals.

In this thesis, by using Clandinin and Connelly's landscape metaphor (1995), I have provided a view of the epistemological and moral world of teaching and learning in the community college system in Ontario. In order to map classroom life in the social context, I have borrowed the notion of landscape contextualized as a moral and intellectual place and embraced curriculum as the temporal and situational relationships among people, places, and events (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988). Using the landscape metaphor has permitted me to think about the temporal dimensions of the inside and out-of-classroom space and on-the-landscape and off-the-landscape places of the community college to gain new insights into teachers' and students' lives.

Thesis Summary

My thesis inquiry is a community college landscape study using narrative inquiry methods. I use the idea of narrative, as developed by Connelly and Clandinin, and originating primarily in anthropology (Geertz, 1995; Bateson, 1994) and literary theory (e.g. Aitken, 1987; Heilbrun, 1988). This methodology is being used in organizational theory (Czarniawska, 1997), philosophy (Dewey, 1938; Johnson, 1987) psychology, psychiatry (Carr, 1989), and now in nursing and nursing education (Chan, 2001; Lindsay, 2001). Methodologically, I have adopted experientially based approaches to the study of formal adult education teaching settings. For my thesis, I have used a narrative approach that has a kind of holistic, historical way of trying to interpret life on the community college landscape. I am opening the door to a field of study and a program of research that studies the community college landscape and the people who live their lives there.

I have looked at the narrative histories of selected participants within one classroom situation and related those histories to the college classroom and to the changing world in which teachers find themselves. There is surprisingly little research in the literature that actually tells, in detail, about community college students and life in the community college. There are policy studies, but no experiential teaching-learning studies. I am opening doors to the study of teaching and learning, the study of teachers, the study of learners, and the study of classrooms. I seek to construct a way to think about community college education, which I view as a form of adult education that brings meaning to the literature of adult education, community college and higher education research.

Through my study, teacher, student and the researcher's emotional responses to everyday life experience are carried forward into academic and research dialogue. Life experience in the classroom has been narrativized, showing that the complexities of teachers' and students' lives must enter into academic and higher education discourse for meaning making. As it stands, both on the community college landscape and in the literature, the teacher identity is obscured, and there is no place for the community college teacher to stand. Most community college educators do not draw on the adult education literature. Adult education thinking, for the most part, does not enter into community college discourse. Community college teachers have been living among the shifting-and-colliding forces on a fragmented landscape. In terms of the actual community college classroom, temporal rhythms have also been disrupted. My research into the classroom experience of my 1998 semester, on the continuum of my community college teaching life, has provided a pathway for understanding the contemporary community college classroom and my own changing teacher identity.

As the teacher in this story I was living on a fragmented landscape. As the researcher in this story, I lived and storied, and likely will continue to re-story and reconstruct this experience and the dilemmas in living and researching within the teacher/researcher dialectic. I entered my thesis writing journey seeking true north. At this point in time, I know not to seek certainty, though, it is my hope to influence and refocus current adult education discourse by bringing forward research that is practical and personal, as well as theoretical. My research goal is to carry research forward into adult education and community college tradition.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Post-Secondary Education: Community Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology:

A History

Over time, like other institutions, the community college continues to be shaped and reshaped in response to the shifting influences and demands of the larger social world. In this overview, I focus primarily on the Ontario College system and draw on the discourse of other community colleges in Canada and the United States. For this discussion, I draw on the community college literature in educational encyclopedias, *Lifelong Education for Adults: An International Handbook* (1989) and the *Encyclopedia of Educational Research* sponsored by the American Educational Research Association (1992). For my ERIC literature search for the period 1966 to 1997, I used the key words *Canadian* and *community colleges* and found 244 documents for my inquiry. Articles and documents within these sources are primarily on policy (e.g. Gallagher, 1990; Pitman, 1986; Dennison and Levin, 1988) and finance with a historical orientation (e.g. Dennison and Gallagher, 1986; Dennison, 1980, Ontario Ministry of Education, 1967). There is also a smaller body of research on service, and the needs and characteristics of community college clientele. Articles specific to Canadian community college teaching are found in *The College Quarterly* (e.g. 1993). This journal is written primarily for the collective audience of community administrators, college faculty and staff who may be conducting research on teaching, learning and policy.

When I used the key words *community college teaching* in a CBC WEBSPRIS, full text search for the period between the years 1976 and 2000, no documents were found. Using the same program, when I applied the key words *community college classroom*, again, no documents found. Pursuing my search with the following words from the program's index *community, faculty, college – community, college institution, college level, colleges Canadian*, I found 313 documents.

It is not my intention in this overview to provide a comprehensive description of the history of the Canadian community college and its governance structure. Instead, I provide a temporal overview highlighting some of the salient events that shape everyday life experiences on the college landscape. Continuing to build on my landscape metaphor as first introduced in the prologue to this thesis, a *landscape* is filled with diverse people, things and events, all of which are in different relationship to one another (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). I could provide a vast variety of explanations as to why I am drawn to landscape as metaphor. First and foremost, I am a lover of the outdoors and have always found it difficult to resist taking in my surroundings and noticing its influence on those and myself around me. The numerous dimensions of a landscape, including the movement, sounds, texture, and all the visual variations, appeal to how I find myself looking at the world. The expansiveness of a landscape accommodates to my inquiry into the extensiveness of the community college system and all of its' complexities.

I understand *professional knowledge landscapes* as composed of a wide variety of components influenced by an ample diversity of people, places and things (Connelly and Clandinin, 1995). In these terms, I embrace the landscape as an intellectual and moral place. As suggested by Connelly and Clandinin, to enter a professional knowledge landscape such as the community college system, is to enter into a place of *story.* In this appendix, the literature of the community college landscape is storied.

The community college landscape is composed of two fundamentally different places: in-classroom places and out-of-classroom places. Out-of-classroom places are spaces filled with knowledge that is funnelled into the college system and ultimately into the community college classroom for the purpose of altering the lives of faculty and students. This appendix is primarily about those-out-of-classroom places. This discussion moves beyond the walls of the community college landscape and embraces legislation, government reports, and the literature resources already mentioned.

Beginning with a brief outline of the inception of the community colleges, I highlight provincial documents that are pivotal to the Ontario community college history. I include excerpts that hold the historical context of the continuing narrative of Ontario's post-secondary education system. Three factors mentioned in Ontario Premier William Davis' inaugural speech: knowledge revolution, new technological revolution, and the population explosion, contribute to the character of the current community college system in Ontario.

Defining the term community college, Cohen (1992) describes institutions that are accredited to award "the associate degree at its highest degree" (p. 689). In the United States, the term community college embraces two-year colleges, independent junior colleges, technical institutes and a few of the proprietary based trade colleges. Cohen documents that in the United States, there were 1,250 community colleges occupation programs, including programs that are the first two years of baccalaureate studies. Basic skills development and a variety of special interest and cultural recreational courses are provided to more that five million students.

In Canada, as outlined by the Association Canadian Community Colleges (2000), it is the responsibility of community colleges to respond to the training needs of business, industry and the private sector. Community colleges also meet the educational needs of students who are vocationally directed. Throughout the colleges' history, the function of these institutions has been debated. Are colleges to provide employers with specifically trained workers, provide a more general educational training to students, or both (White, 2000)? Community colleges have not, until recently, granted degrees. Currently, colleges are entering into partnership with degree-granting universities, a sentiment that has transpired in terms of transfer grants since the beginning history of the Canadian community college.

Among some of the differences between community colleges and universities is the close linkage and integration of college curriculum activity with economic policies, business and industry. These linkages, overseen by the College Board of Governors, are endorsed with working connections between Community Advisory committees and each individual college program. As well, many college programs include field placement components and cooperative linkages and learning opportunities with business, industry and the private sector.

The Beginning History of the Community College in Canada and the United States

In the United States, community colleges were proposed in the middle of the nineteenth century (Cohen, 1992). The colleges in the United States were thought about in terms of accommodating freshman and sophomores who were not considered mature or committed enough to pursue scholarly study, similar to a much later response from among Canadian university presidents. College growth coincided with the changing demands for post-secondary and university education, beginning in the United States in the 1940's (Cohen, 1992). A similar demand would transpire later in Canada.

The post-secondary institution called the community college spawned as a result of the growing college-age population in the 1960's. Soon after the colleges were in place, people of all ages came to use them (Yarrington, 1989). Community colleges in the United States, which began as local institutions, assured access to higher education for youth, and soon after, became community based institutions for adult education. This pattern, to some degree, was replicated in Canada. The development in adult education services in the United States and post-secondary services in Canada took place in the community colleges because of the changing economy and shifting societal trends. It is generally understood that the community college movement in the United States influenced the rapid development of the design of community colleges in Canada, although William Davis, in his inaugural speech to the legislature in 1965, declared no intention to import the American junior college system into Canada. It was suggested that the Canadian college might *resemble* the American colleges, because both would serve populations of a similar age (with perhaps the needs of those youth groups differing between the two countries) but the main difference would be in the program emphasis.

In the United States, in the first seventy years of the 20th Century, colleges grew at a rapid rate; by 1975 all fifty-two states supported a community college system. Yarrington (1989) notes that colleges were created "at just the right time and with a policy framework that allowed them to be sufficiently flexible and responsive to community needs. As the need for continuing education for adults was identified by the colleges, they adapted and created new programs" (p. 286).

In Canada, the development of the community colleges is a shorter history. There is debate about which college is the first in Canada. Dennison and Gallagher (1986) note that a case can be made that both Lakehead Community College in Thunderbay, Ontario and Lethbridge in Alberta, are Canada's first community colleges, however the authors suggest that Lakehead, which eventually became a university in 1965, likely earns the title of Canada's first community college. *Lethbridge Community College* in Alberta was created in 1958. The Lakehead institution began in January 1948 with twelve students, and in 1956 *Lakehead College of Arts, Science and Technology* was endorsed by the Ontario Legislature.

The conceptual roots of the community college system began in the 1950's with the published report, *Royal Commission on Education in Ontario*. This report recommended the establishments of "Junior Colleges" to be operated by local authorities (Dennison and Gallagher, 1986). The report was criticized because the proposal seemed to resemble the first year of an honours university course. Though no action was taken on the recommendations, the problem of the need for more employment training and additional opportunity for technical education was made public.

In 1955, E.F. Sheffield, from the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, reported to the *Annual Meeting of the National Conference of the Canadian University*, a projected increase of 100% enrollment by 1965 (Dennison and Gallagher, 1986). The province of Ontario's response to Sheffield's statistical notification included a steady and unprecedented expansion of the university sector, and the development of the large non-university post-secondary sector, which was later to become the community college system. Expansion also took place with the conversion of denominational colleges into public universities, and the expansion of new public universities.

In a statement by the Minister of Education William Davis to the Legislature on May 21, 1965, there was reference to the planned ability of colleges to meet the "relevant needs of all adults within a community, at all socio-economic levels, of all kinds of interests and aptitudes, and at all stages of educational achievement" (Jacobs, 1971, p. 9). A primary difference between colleges in the United States and Canada is pointed out by Cohen and Brawer (1987), who state that the American community college was founded "to serve as a link between the lower schools and establishments of higher learning" (p. xi). Community colleges in the United States are a primary site of access to higher education (Sanchez and Laanan, 1998). The community colleges continue to provide primary access to a "college education" in a "systematic and cost-effective" way (Sanchez and Laanan, 1998, p. 5). Curriculum, in these authors' terms, is discussed in terms of a "variety of services to its constituents, including vocational-technical education, continuing education, remedial education, community service and academic transfer preparation" (Sanchez and Laanan, 1998, p. 5).

People and Groups on the Landscape Who Influenced the Development and Design of the Community College

Influence of University Presidents

The roots of the non-university institutions can be traced back to the *Post-Secondary Education Report, 1962 - 1970* issued by the Commission of Presidents. Dennison and Gallagher (1986) imply the possibility that after a pre-publication revision, the January 1965 report rejected two options for easing the stress of the projected enrollment numbers on their institutions. The first option offered by the presidents involved the conversion of the Ontario Technical and Teachers' Colleges into "composite" junior colleges on the grounds that these institutions would be regarded as inferior to the universities. The second option that was described in the report, and rejected for Ontario, was the implementation of the United States junior college model. The university presidents' recommendation to create18,000 additional student spaces in existing institutions to meet the increased demand for an alternate form of post-secondary education did not receive public acceptance. However, the Ontario peoples' interest in the development and expansion of the educational system at the post-secondary level was noted in a *June 1963 Supplementary Report to the Presidents*.

In this report, the Committee of Presidents addressed two deficiencies in the Ontario educational system. First noted was the crucial lack of opportunity for adult education in the province. The committee recognized the need for a non-university sector, particularly in vocational and technical areas for students graduating from secondary school systems without aptitudes for university study.

> Adult education and vocational and technical training needs prompted the proposal of a "Community College of Applied Arts and Technology" model which would resemble the American community colleges in its emphasis on terminal vocational courses and adult education, but would be compatible with the Ontario system (Dennison and Gallagher, 1986, p. 33).

In his doctoral thesis, Bartram (1980) notes the height of influence the university presidents seemed to have in shaping the community colleges, and points to their concern with colleges interfering with the university's unique position of granting degrees. The university presidents were also determined to retain grade 13.

Influence of R.W.B. Jackson

A person of dominant influence on the model of post-secondary education in Ontario was R.W.B. Jackson, Director of the Department of Educational Research at the University of Toronto and later founding member of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Advisor to The Committee of University Affairs, Secretary to the *1950 Royal Committee on Education*, and a close associate of the Minister of Education on fact-finding excursions preceding the establishment of the new colleges, Jackson's influence on the government's policy concerning colleges was particularly significant (Dennison and Gallagher, 1986). Study briefs submitted from individuals and groups, specifically the Ontario Presidents, Ontario Council of University Faculty Association, and the Ontario Teacher's Federation informed the Minister's address.

Influence and the Role of Canadian Adult Educators

There is little mention, and only isolated representation in the bodies of community college and adult education literature, of the role of the *Canadian Association for Adult Education* in the development of the community college movement in Canada. This oversight occurred in spite of the Education Minister's direct reference to meeting the relevant needs of adults in a changing socio-economic society that called for further education and training. Dennison and Gallagher (1986) note that in years prior to the actual inception of the community college, the Canadian Association for Adult Education anticipated and began to discuss the community college and its potential direction in the area of adult or continuing education. With the association's foresight that the community colleges could provide adults with opportunities to return to, or to continue in situations where they could learn – a principle at the heart of the adult education movement – the Canadian Association for Adult Education held an exploratory National Conference on the Community College in June of 1966. Though the main impact of this conference was to confirm the community college movement, it did little more than attract the attention of those adult educators who were working on the fringes of post-secondary education.

In June 1967, the Canadian Association for Adult Education entered a second conference with five national associations: The Canadian Teacher's Federation, The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, The Canadian Association of University Teachers, The Canadian Education Association, and the Canadian Association of Secondary School Inspectors. Building on the impact of the previous conference, this conference was little more than an information-sharing session about the differences in policies, structures and organizations throughout Canada's new colleges (Dennison and Gallagher, 1986). The third step, under the leadership of Alan Thomas, took the initiatives Canada-wide. A three-year grant to fund a Canadian Commission for the Community College was secured from the Kellogg Foundation. Hearings were held in major cities throughout Canada, national seminars were conducted, and a publication called *College Canada* was published and distributed to colleges. The commission became a national clearinghouse for information among institutions.

In 1970, an Assembly of Colleges convened in Ottawa, where the Association of the Canadian Community Colleges became the national college organization to which the Canadian Commission had provided the impetus.

Two functions of the new colleges identified by the Canada Commission for the Community College, and ones that Dennison and Gallagher (1986) suggest set "high sights" for the newly formed Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), included the colleges becoming intermingled with the commitments fundamental to adult learning, and also serving as the incentive for continuous learning as a basic requirement to enlightened involvement in democratic processes.

Dennison and Gallagher point out that the ACCC suffered a slow beginning with the eventual withdrawal of the Canadian Association for Adult Education's leadership and direction, along with the waning interests on the part of some of the provinces' colleges who were focused their insular developments. However by the late 1970's there was explicit evidence of a revived mission, and by 1983 the Association for Canadian Community Colleges was debt free and authenticated in a nationwide network of instructors committed to college curricula. ACCC continues to be an active association with national conferences held every year.

For the leaders of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, who were involved at the beginning of the nationwide activity among the colleges, there was disappointment. The concept of continuous learning as a national strategy had not come to life. The immense effort put forth by the Canadian Association for Adult Education on behalf of adults and the principles of lifelong learning is noted by Dennison and Gallagher (1986):

> ...no organization had done more to encourage Canadians to pursue learning as a self-motivated activity; no organization had expressed greater respect for adults as learning beings; no organization had faced such difficulty in having its views on adult learning respected by other sectors of Canadian education (p. 278) .

It was the hope of the Canadian Association for Adult Education that community colleges would more resemble the UNESCO definition embraced about a learning society devoting efforts and resources to the equal provision of educational opportunities for adult learners.

Post-Secondary Education and the Birth of the Community College

On May 21, 1965 in the Ontario Legislature, the Minister of Education William Davis introduced *Bill 153, An Act to Amend the Department of Education Act*. With the acceptance of Bill 153, the college system had its beginning. By 1967, nineteen colleges were in place in communities throughout Ontario. At the legislature Davis stated,

> The bill marks a major step forward in the development of our educational system; it provides for the introduction of a new level and type of education, one, which is still in keeping with our traditions and accomplishments. Above all else, it goes far toward making a reality of the promise - indeed of the stated policy - of this government to provide through education and training, not only an equality of opportunity to all sectors of our populations, but the fullest possible development of each individual to the limit of his ability (Department of Education, p. 5).

Ontario in the 1960's enjoyed a buoyant economy. As noted in a statement by Dr. John Deutsch, Chairman of the Economic Council of Canada on March 1, 1965 at the Canadian Club in Toronto, Ontario's work place was quickly changing:

> The world, in which we live and must make our way, is one that demands an ever-changing pattern of occupations and rising levels of skills. The occupations which are growing most rapidly are those which involve advancing levels of basic education and training. The occupations requiring the lowest levels of formal education are declining.
>
> There are significant deficiencies and gaps which remain to be overcome, especially in respect of research, the retraining of workers and the development of highly skilled manpower ... a considerable number of Canadian companies are experiencing a scarcity of managerial, technical and scientific personnel. There has long been a deficiency in our educational system in regard to the training of technical personnel beyond high school but short of the university level ... (Department of Education, p. 5) .

As noted by policy makers and educational researchers (Dennison, 1980) these dramatic changes in the economy put tremendous pressure on the education system. At the same time, the Ontario school system had been revised so those students, who did not plan to take the university-oriented grade 13, could graduate after grade 12. Options for these students were to enroll in a small number of technology institutes and vocational centers, or enter the work force without training. An excerpt from a February 23, 1965 address by the Honourable John P. Robarts, Premier, to the Assembly about economic implications of technological change indicates further concern and increased emphasis on the relationship between economic growth and education:

> Ontario's future growth and the well-being of its people depend upon our continued ability to improve our competitive position as an industrial economy. This Government believes that increased productivity and efficiency must be our goal and that this goal can be best achieved in an economy in which each individual has freedom of choice. (Department of Education, p.6).

At the same address, Robarts asserted that the answer to most of the socio-economic challenges relevant to development and human resources rests on education. "We must prepare Canadian youth to enter the multitude of highly skilled jobs available today and the ever-greater number will arise in the future. (Ontario Department of Education, p. 7)

Using a "bursting at the seams" metaphor, Davis addressed the fact of the past WWII population explosion. In his address to the legislature, Davis quoted from The Grade 13 Study Committee, 1964:

> The truth of the matter is that we are now in an entirely different world from that of the 1920's and 1930's, and it is necessary that we extend our educational system to meet the demands of the New World. ... In the present crisis, the need cannot be simply met by alterations or additions at secondary school level; this time we must turn our attention to the post-secondary level, where we must create a new kind of institution that will provide, in the interests of students for who a university course is unsuitable, a type of training, which universities are not designed to offer. ... The committee is therefore recommending the establishment of community colleges to provide these new and alternative programs (The Department of Education, p. 11).

Even though the colleges were to be post-secondary institutions, they commenced under jurisdiction the Department of Education and not under the new Department of University Affairs. At the Legislature, Davis also told the speaker that the previous financial arrangement with the federal government and the linkage to the field of technical education and trade training, all of which was a satisfactory arrangement, would be maintained with the community college plan.

Davis particularized four principles that would constitute the social identity of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario:

> 1. Colleges must embrace total education, vocational, avocation, regardless of formal entrance qualifications with provision for complete vertical and horizontal mobility.
>
> 2. Colleges must develop curriculum that meets the combined cultural aspirations and occupational needs of the student.
>
> 3. Colleges must operate in the closest possible cooperation with business and industry, and with social and other public agencies, including education, to ensure that curricula are at all times abreast, if not in advance of the changing requirements of a technological society.
>
> 4. They must be dedicated to progress, through constant research, not only in curricula but also in pedagogical technique and in administration (Department of Education, p. 32).

The Nine-Seventies

Gallagher and Dennison depict the colleges in the 1970's as searching for respectability, and in doing so, coming close resembling traditional institutions and taking on traditional roles.

> It is true that these colleges were more hospitable to older and part-time students than other institutions for adults, but in the main they required students to meet their demands. Few were prepared to adjust their requirements to the more revolutionary views advocated by frontier adult educators around the world. Few of the new colleges were learning centres for adults; most were teaching institutions to which many older and part-time students were admitted (Dennison and Gallagher, 1986, p. 278).

The Nineteen-Eighties

As in the rest of the world, 1980's Canada encountered a recession worse than the 1930's. It was anticipated that more than one million Canadians would lose their jobs. By 1982, more than 1,341,000 people were out of work, and one fifth of that population were individuals under the age of twenty-five (Seneca at 25).

In the 1980's, major changes in Canadian community colleges took place (Dennison and Levin, 1989). In Canada, as identified by Dennison and Levin (1988), the college system in Canada evolved out of very different circumstances than in the United States. The sociocultural roots and needs within each Canadian province shaped the educational directions of each college. In the United States, women who were older than the traditional college-age were among the largest number of students enrolled in college education. Students who already held baccalaureate and graduate degrees made up ten to fifteen percent of this increasing enrollment. The average age of students attending community college in the United States in the 1980's was 28 to 30 years of age. A number of Ontario College sites underwent further expansion in response to program growth shaped by technological and industrial change. By the mid-eighties, the economy moved into a mode of consumerism; the increased purchase of electronics, computers, satellites and CD players all played a role in the increased demand for further career-focused education. But the primary reason for this increasing enrollment was the trend toward lifelong education for adults (Yarrington, 1989).

Walter Pitman, appointed Advisor to the Minister of Colleges and Universities by the Honourable Gregory Sorbora, submitted his June 1986 report. Pitman was engaged by the Minister on December 18, 1985 to assess the Ontario College system's governance structure. The Pitman Report findings was based on an informal process of "broad-consultation groups" within the college and the private sector, as well as meetings with hundreds of individuals, including the Council of Regents, Board of Governors, college presidents, administrators, faculty, support staff and students. Pitman also consulted with individuals who were instrumental in the beginning stages of the college system and key individuals from provincial jurisdictions.

Pitman reiterates the foundational purposes of the design of the community colleges and remarks on its wide-ranging success, making reference to the growth at the local, provincial and federal government levels. He also pointed to the increasing demands and expectations of the growing clientele during a time when there were fewer resources per student activity. Suggesting that the colleges had become "victims" of their own success, the bulk of Pitman's report revolved around the quality of community college working conditions that were "eroded beyond hope" (1986, p. 2). At the time of Pitman's study, faculty negotiations were ongoing and in Pitman's word "took on a life of its own." The tone of major preoccupation with collective bargaining was evident throughout Pitman's report.

The faculty strike in 1984, supported by the Ontario Public Service Employee's Union, was a key turning point in the Ontario community college system. The 1984 strike was the first of two, and resulted in the formation of the Instructional Assignment Review Committee – chaired by Michael Skolnick – established by an *Act of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario*. The resolution produced a more equitable faculty workload, and the Standard Workload Formula (SWF). In some cases, the outcome also resulted in further adversarial relations between faculty and the administration as suggested in the following observation that "many administrators observe that implementing this formula has concurrently reduced the efficiency of these institutions" (1990, p.11) .The second faculty strike took place in 1989.

Looking back in the college's history, Pitman suggested that the 1966 governance structure was appropriate for the introduction and expansion of the community college system. In his report, Pitman clearly addressed the declining morale among faculty, support staff, middle management and presidents. He suggested this decline posed as a major threat to the colleges'continuing capacity to meet the growing needs of the province. Pitman's recommendation included a renewed mandate, a renewed commitment, and renewed dedication. Noting the tendency for the colleges to be thought of – and to think of themselves as – "crown corporations," and the emphasis on "bottom-line," "budget-management," "entrepreneurism," and the immediate response to market needs and business models, Pitman suggested the colleges "swing back the pendulum toward the college as an educational institution," (Pitman, 1986, p. 5) and begin to think of themselves in terms of learning institutions. In his findings, Pitman noted senior administrators had seen themselves as being "observed and judged on their capacity to serve this industrial model – a model, ironically, that many progressive industries have eschewed in favour of more horizontal, operational styles" (1986, p. 5).

Pitman observed a high level of college activity, with faculty, students, support staff and middle management in attendance at functions relevant to college governance. Observing the governance structure, Pitman suggested the government had been less than supportive of efforts toward workable levels of collegiality. In his report, Pitman observed a style of confrontation among management and employees portaying relationships that were non-trustworthy. Pitman noted that within the informal curriculum, people appeared to take advantage of one another. "… this behaviour affects the minds of students who will soon participate in Ontario's industrial and service economy..." (1986, p. 5), Pitman recommended that encouraging participation, team-building and collegiality be a high priority. He stated that the colleges "require [a] governance structure that exudes integrity, fosters collegiality, and clarifies the lines of responsibility in the context of tough decisions to be made in a system ridden with low morale and prevailing tensions" (Pitman, 1986, p. 5).

Turning to earlier times in the history and the success of the college system when there was a three-percent unemployment (1965 and 1966), Pitman pointedly questioned the role of colleges in 1980 when the unemployment rate is much higher. He queried the validity of the continued breadth of vocational-oriented programs offered by the college. He also suggested that the success of the colleges must not be judged only by their employement placement record, but on the quality of the graduates contributing to a more effective provincial work force.

The Association of Canada's Community Colleges (ACCC) published the study, *Canada's Community Colleges in the 1980's: Responsiveness and Renewal* in August 1988. Researchers Dennison and Levin addressed organizational change within Canada's community college system during the 1980's, looking at the extent that colleges retained the principles and ideals of "democratization of opportunity, accessibility, adaptability, and comprehensives" which gave birth to the college system (1988, p. i). Dennison and Levin sought data from college chief executive officers and government personnel who dealt with the colleges. On completion of this study, the researchers concluded that "much of the idealism and innovation which guided the colleges in the earlier days were still to be found." The researchers acknowledged the colleges' compensatation for more "entrepreneurial," "less community oriented," and "tight" management. This study found that the college's approaches and use of organizational theory "proved to be useful in assessing changes in the forms and direction" the colleges have chosen to take (p. ii).

Four factors based on the findings in the 1988 Dennison and Levin report touched, and in some ways paralleled, the 1986 Pitman Report. In the 1988 report, the researchers discussed the vulnerable nature of the community college and compared its situation to the position of university and secondary schools. The first factor, one not discussed in the Pitman Report, was that the colleges do not benefit from a long-standing tradition of academic independence, as do universities. This sentiment further extends the questionable and seemingly shifting identity of the community college system. One issue related to the colleges' identity, is the notion that colleges are "merely second-choice institutions" (Gallagher, 1990, p. 16).

The second factor raised by Dennison and Levin has a temporal quality, and one that Pitman alludes to in his discussion. The colleges are continually asked to conform to public policy and a "climate of expectation." Pitman noted the college system's immediate response to market needs and business modes. Dennison and Levin noted the unpredictable and volatile socio-economic environment that the colleges function within, primarily due to the external influence of the three-tiered system, including the levels of federal, provincial and local governments. Colleges are engaged in occupational training according to the federal funding that is channeled through the provincial government. This funding fluctuates with respect to each individual college's training involvement. When federal governments revise policy, as in the case of the Canadian Job Strategy, the college directly experiences the financial impact.

The fourth factor raised by Dennison and Levin is that colleges are also expected to respond to the communities and regions where they are located, which has a direct influence on program patterns and priorities.

The difference in the scope of participants in both the Pitman Report (1986) and the Dennison and Levin Report (1988) are evident. Few studies to this point, other than Pitman, have included the voices and opinions of students, faculty and middle management. The Pitman Report takes a beginning and necessary step in community college research. The report takes a preliminary step and enters into the lives of people on the landscape other than policy makers, senior administration and chief executives. By including informal consultations with faculty, students, support and middle management, Pitman's discussion has moved closer, however minimally, to the daily life on the community college system landscape.

The Nineteen-Nineties

A report that generated much discussion throughout the community college system was the *Final Report of Vision 2000: Quality and Opportunity* published in 1990 by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. This report addressed the question, "What should Ontario's college system look like in year 2000 – and how do we get there from here?" The then Minister of Colleges and Universities, Lyn McLeod, initiated the Vision 2000 report in October 1988. A steering committee of thirty-three members was struck, and together with the Council of Regents, a research and consultation process (including surveys, focus groups, meetings and interviews, and forty recommendations), was directed at the vision of the college system. The work that went into the Vision 2000 report was perceived as being at a "crossroads" at a time when fundamental and far-reaching change was needed. By the mid-1990's, colleges were confronted by the threat of reduced funding and the reduction of federal transfer payments to provinces. Provincial governments projected the need for tighter linkages between higher education, economic priorities, and market place demands (Dennison, 1995). A range of forces shaped organizational change within the colleges. Among the many changes within the community colleges and one that is of particular interest to the life narratives of the students and teachers written about in this thesis, is the shift from "a multifunctional institution with a comprehensive curriculum to an institution more oriented toward training for employment" (Levin, 1996, p. 10). Noting the pressure resulting from globalization, technological advances, and the changing workplace, Levin points to the surmounting pressure advanced by government, business and industry toward changing the historic role of the community college. Since their inception, it has been the mission of Canada's community colleges to maintain education and training to adults, to provide access to educational opportunities and to meet the local needs of individual communities. Levin (1996) proposes that the community colleges have "tenaciously emphasized its primary function - teaching, which includes the imparting of knowledge and learning, not simply skills acquisition" (p. 11).

Conclusion:

Past Education Minister, William Davis inaugurated the Ontario Community College of Applied Arts and Technology in 1965. Davis explained that these new institutions would serve "those parts of the population whose needs were not being met by the existing system; secondary school graduates not destined for university, adults and out-of-school youth" (Ontario Council of Regents, 1993, p. 3). It was within the vision of the community college system to provide career or occupation-oriented education and meet the anticipated needs of the generation of baby-boomer high school graduates. It was within the mandate that these new institutions would serve their local communities and work closely with business and industry to ensure that programs were in line with the demands of evolving technology. Ontario has twenty-three colleges, with the most recent being La Citè College in Ottawa.

There are 203 college-level institutions in Canada (Education Support Branch, 1994). With more than 900 campuses, there are more than 30,000 faculty employed at Canadian colleges (ACCC, 2000). These institutions vary in size, but the ACCC estimates that each establishment has approximately 5,000 full-time and 15,000 part-time students participating in programs ranging among health, business, technology, trades, academic upgrading, applied and creative arts, social services, hospitality and university education.

Though these institutions have varying mandates, policies and frameworks, they share the primary function of meeting the training needs of the private sector, business and industry. Each of these institutions shares in meeting the educational needs of high school students who are vocationally oriented. A more recent change among many of these institutions are university transfer and degree programs.

The landscape of the community college is narratively constructed with a history that has moral, emotional and aesthetic dimensions. In this appendix, I have pointed to some of the shifts in the larger social world that have shaped the community college's historical narrative. The community college movements, both in the United States and in Canada, are a story of rapid expansion with a range of incentives and multiple agendas. Lieberman's (1998) notation about colleges in the United States, also pertains to the Canadian Community College movement, "Initiated as an institution to provide access, to offer transfer as well as terminal education, and initiate lifelong learning opportunities, the two-year college now confronts an identity crisis" (p. 13). As the moral, emotional and aesthetic dimension of the community college continue to re-shape, the identity of both the insitution and the people who learn and work on that landscape, continues to be shaped.

Appendix B

Subject Outline

Community College

Helping Profession Program

Subject Title:	Advanced Group Work Course
Semester	Spring 1998
Professor	Bev Brewer
Prerequisite:	First semester group work course

Subject Description

This subject develops further the group theory subject taken in semester two, with an emphasis on developing leadership skills, helping within different types of groups, and using groups in community change.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this subject, the student will:

1. Acquire the ability to thoughtfully reflect on and evaluate facilitation and group leadership skills.
2. Demonstrate the ability to contribute and participate fully in a learning community by engaging in shared leadership in an adult learning community.
3. Develop assessment and observation skills needed to inform and manage group behaviour and group development.
4. Demonstrate skills in giving and receiving constructive feedback to a learning group using a variety of feedback tools.
5. Give evidence, in a reading log, of understanding a variety of group theories.
6. Discuss the application of the appropriate intervention needed in a variety of group contexts.
7. Provide evidence, in a reading log of analytical reading skills.
8. Write a narrative, outlining the meaning of their learning experience, to current field placement and future work place situations.

Subject Content

See attached addendum.

Learning Modes

Reading groups, jigsaw, group work, self-evaluation, fish bowl, peer feedback

Required Texts

Dimock, H.G., and Devine, I. (1970). *Assessing Group Dynamics*, 3rd edition. North York, Captus Press Inc.

Dimmock, H.G. and Devine, I. (1996). *Managing Dynamic Groups*, 3rd edition.

Dimmock, H. G. (1993). *How to Observe Our Group*, 3rd ed.

Dimock, H. G. (1992). *Intervention and Empowerment. Helping Organizations to Change.*

References and Other Reading

Adler, M. J. and Van Doren, C. (1967). *How To Read a Book.* New York: Touchstone.

Benjamin, A. (1978). *Behaviour in Small Groups.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Knowles, M. (1975). *Self-directed learning. A Guide for Learners and Teachers.* New Jersey: Cambridge.

Rubin, H. J. and Rubin, I. S. (1992). *Community Organizing and Development.* Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan.

Schulman, L. (1984). *Skills of Helping: Individual and Groups.* Illinois: F.E. Peacock

Assignments	**Due Date**	**Evaluation**
1. Learning Journal	N/A	Sat/Unsat
2. Reading Log	Feb. 5/6: Mar. 19/20; Apr. 9/10	35%
3. Reflection on Facilitation	one week after facilitation	20%
4. A Personal Narrative	April 16/17	45%

Assignments handed in past the due date are subject to academic penalty.

Assignment Presentation

All assignments, other than the journal, will be presented in MLA or APA format. Assignments must be typed or word-processed.

Cheating

Passing off the work of others as your own, giving or receiving assistance during tests or exams, disregarding the rules and conditions set for taking tests and exams, or for completing projects or assignments, all constitute cheating. The minimum penalty is zero credit for the work in question. The maximum penalty is expulsion from the college. For future information, refer to Academic Policy on cheating and plagiarism.

College Discrimination / Harassment Policy

All students and employees have the right to study and work in an environment that is free from discrimination and/or harassment. Language or activities that defeat this objective violate the College Policy on Discrimination/Harassment and shall not be tolerated. Information and assistance are available from the Department of ______ at ________.

Please refer to College Academic Policy for further information.

Date of design: January 1998

Approved by ___________

Department Chair, School of _________

Addendum

Topic Outline, Readings, and Activities

1.	Jan. 15/16	Introductions, Expectations and Explanations If we're an adult learning community, what do you want to look like? How to observe group behaviour. (Green Book, p. 26)
2.	Jan. 22/23	Organizing strong productive groups (Managing, p. 26 – 36) Fish Bowl: Red – Worksheet (Managing, p. i – 25) Fish Bowl: Blue – Developing goals of groups building: apply to placement. (Managing, p. 21)
3.	Jan. 28/29	Managing and developing strong groups (p. 32 – 44) Fish Bowl: Blue – Exercise: Clear and unclear goals (1 hr.) Fish Bowl: Rd – Red group gives feedback to Blue group on dynamics within the process – 2 facilitators.
4.	Feb. 5/6	Experiment – Collecting group information (Assessing, p. 1 – 23) Fish Bowl: Red – Findings – 2 facilitators.
5.	Feb. 12/13	Fish Bowl: Blue: Fish Bowl: Red
6.	Feb. 19/20	Split Group: Midway Evaluation – group development
	Feb. 26/27	Block Placement
	Mar. 5/6	Spring Break
7.	Mar. 12/13	Split Group with jigsaw: Organizing an intervention
8.	Mar. 19/20	Split Group: Different types of groups and facilitation Split Group: Organizing and leading (Gold, p. 57 –66)
9.	Mar. 26/27	Split Group: Personal Concerns (Gold, p. 67 – 74)
10.	Apr. 2/3	Split Group: Planning (Managing, p. 59 – 79)
11.	Apr. 9/10	Split Group: Closure (Managing, p. 78 – 81)

Assignments

1. Learning Journal

Students are encouraged to maintain a learning journal in this subject. The journal will not be graded or evaluated. Students will use the journal to chronicle and reflect on their community learning experience in the subject. Students are encouraged to draw on their learning journal to complete the narrative assignment.

Write "stories of experience" in your journal. The story involves you the learner in an adult learning community. Your journal should be an ongoing account of your actions and thoughts about those actions in this adult learning community. Use your journal to keep an ongoing record of group activities and reflections on those activities. Keep the journal consistently throughout the life of the learning community.

Be descriptive of your actions and the actions of other members. Write as much as you can in your journal. Record the reactions that you have while in the group and after you are away from the group process. Record the feelings you have about your experiences.

As you react emotionally and ethically to the group process be mindful of the past experiences and memories. Focus your journal on the experience of being a student in an adult learning community learning about group work.

2. Reading Log
Apply the following rules in analytical reading to your reading log:
a) Find the important words and come to terms with the author.
b) Mark the most import sentences in a book and discover the propositions they contain.
c) Locate or construct the basic arguments in the book by finding them in the connection of sentences.

In your reading log, develop your ability to come to terms with the author. Use your reading log to demonstrate your understanding of the author's message about group work theory.

3. Reflecting on Facilitation
Each student will facilitate or co-facilitate a part of a class session. For this assignment take the role of a thoughtful practitioner and reflect on your experience in facilitation and leading the group. Establish and assign a letter grade to your performance. Write a rational for this letter grade.

4. A Personal Narrative: An Adult Learning Community
I am asking you to apply narrative in Connelly and Clandinin's terms to study your experience of learning about group work in an adult learning community.

I believe that there is no better way to study group work than to study our own process and to study ourselves. When we understand the difficulties in group work based on our first-hand experience, we will be in a better position to understand how our clients think and feel.

Narrative "is designed to be thought of as an overall life study. A narrative understanding of who we are and what we know, is a study of our whole life"(Connelly and Clandinin, 1988).

Students will write a narrative paper of their own experience of learning about group work in this specific adult learning community. By preparing a narrative, the student is encouraged to think of their 12-session learning process *as one*, or *as a whole*.

"A narrative is a kind of life story, larger and more sweeping than the short stories that compose it. By endlessly telling and re-telling stories about your experience in this adult learning community, you will be refiguring the past and creating purpose for the future as your make meaning of your own experiences" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988).

So that you will not just move through this training and educational experience completing tasks for a letter grade, I am inviting you to *stop, breathe, and continually* *reflect* on this question: What I am doing? Think back, reread your journals, and reflect on them.

To write your narrative use the stories that your wrote in your journal as your *resource* and as your *data*. These stories should be about you, the learner. In each journal entry there is likely a story of your experience.

All stories have plots, but like in many stories, this may not be all that obvious at first. Go back and reread the stories. Read them to others. Read them to yourself. Ask questions about the stories. As you examine these stories, your personal practical knowledge will become apparent. Look for themes, threads and patterns in your stories. Storytelling is one of many tools to help you think back and come to understand yourself. The process of reconstructing events in the past is designed to be useful in understanding ourselves in the present.

Appendix C

Helping Profession Worker Program Student Code of Conduct

Preamble

The XX College of Applied Arts and Technolgoy "Student Rights and Responsibilites" applies to all studens. Further to this policy, the Helping Profession Worker programs requires adherence to the following Student Code of Conduct specifically relation to Helping Profession Work.

As students in the Helping Profession Worker Program, you are training to work in the human service field. This means you will be expected to undertake field placement in a varity of agencies with individuals who are in need of assistance and who are often in vulnerable postions in society. In some situations you will take on the role of a community leader, and as such become a role model for others. Field supervisors have the right to be reasonalby assured that behaviour demonstrated by students will support professional practice and abide by the agencies' polices and procedures.

Field Practice experience requies that you, as a student, understand and demonstrate ethical behaviour.

Eligibility Criteria: To be eligible for field placement and continuation in the program you will demonstrate the following in all classes:

Postive and Effective Interpersonal Skills
a) using self-disclosure appropriately
b) actively listening and showing interest in others
c) demonstrating positive regard for others
d) demonstrating empathy
e) constructively attemptin to resolve conflicts with others
f) demonstrating consistently in verbal and non-verbal communication
g) demonstrating the ability to work as a team member
h) respecting the rights of others
I) respecting the confidentiality of others
j) demonstrating sensitivity and consideration of others

Commitment, Reliability and Integrity in Relations to One's Chosen Career
a) attending required classes and other scheduled learning activities
b) being punctual
c) meeting stated or agreed upon deadlines
d) maintaining confidentiality
e) demonstrating honesty in academics and in dealing with faculty and students
f) seeking assistance when necessary
g) attending appointments designated by faculty

h) following college policies and proceedures

Socially Acceptable Behaviour

a) engaging in behaviour that would increase confidence in one's ability to care for others or be an effective change agent.
b) accepting feedback from othes and modifying behaviour if required
c) maintaining an appropriate standard of dress and personal hyqience
d) demonstrating respect and professionalism for all faculty, staff and students by not engaging in aggressive, threatening and/or aversion behaviour (swearing, yelling, physical and verbal outburst …)
e) being drug and/or alcohol free while engaging in classroom or program related activities.

Agreement

Student: ____
Student Signature: ______________________________________
Date: ____

(A signed copy of this document will be dept in the student's file.)

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